THE LIBRARY
OF
THE UNIVERSITY
OF CALIFORNIA
LOS ANGELES

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2007 with funding from
Microsoft Corporation

http://www.archive.org/details/worksofcharlespa01kockiala

The Works of

CHARLES PAUL DE KOCK

With a General Introduction by

JULES CLARETIE

SISTER ANNE

Translated into English by

MARY HANFORD FORD

VOLUME I

THE FREDERICK J. QUINBY COMPANY

BOSTON LONDON PARIS

Edition

Limited to One Thousand Copies

Number 805

COPYRIGHT, 1902, BY
THE FREDERICK J. QUINBY COMPANY

All rights reserved

EASTERN PRESS
Printers
Boston, Mass., U. S. A.

PQ
2312
F1E
1912
v.1

CONTENTS
VOLUME I

PAGE

Introduction by Jules Claretie xv

CHAPTER I

A Midnight Walk. My Aunt's Five Hundred Francs 1

CHAPTER II

The Count of Montreville. A Fashionable Reception 20

CHAPTER III

Plans of Travel. M. Ménard. En Route . . 35

CHAPTER IV

A New Way of Making Acquaintances. The Baron Potoski 51

CHAPTER V

A Village Inn. What Happened to Our Travellers 67

CHAPTER VI

The Little Wood 102

CHAPTER VII

Dubourg Continues to Play the Gentleman. His Manner of Keeping the Cash 111

1642295

CONTENTS

CHAPTER VIII PAGE

Sister Anne Appears 142

CHAPTER IX

What is She Doing There? The Village Dance, 164

CHAPTER X

Story of Sister Anne 173

CHAPTER XI

A Day in the Wood 182

CHAPTER XII

How We Love at Twenty Years 195

CHAPTER XIII

Dubourg Once More Plays the Gentleman. New Acquaintances 207

CHAPTER XIV

The Visit to the Wood 237

CHAPTER XV

Fête, Dinner, Fireworks and Surprise 256

CHAPTER XVI

The Impromptu Comedians. Events Which are Startling 286

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS
VOLUME I

DE KOCK, CHARLES PAUL . . . . . Frontispiece
Etching by Jacques Reich from the original painting by Gigoux.

PAGE

"YES," CRIED DUBOURG, IN HIS TURN, DRAWING TWO PISTOLS OF HEAVIER CALIBRE FROM HIS POCKET, "AND NOW WHO WILL BE THE NEXT?" 73
Photogravure from original painting by Albert de Ford Pitney.

HER HEAD WAS LYING ON HER LOVER'S BREAST, AND HER ARMS WERE AROUND HIS NECK . . 244
Photogravure from original drawing by Arthur I. Keller.

"THE BARON WILL COME! HE CALLS ME CHAMBERTIN D'ALLEVARD!" 260
Photogravure from original drawing by W. Glackens.

INTRODUCTION

People have often repeated and have also sometimes contested the story of how Pope Gregory XVI received the famous author Chateaubriand, and immediately asked him,—

"How is my dear son Paul de Kock (Mi figlio Paolo di Kocko)?"

Nothing could prove better than this interest of the pope, the ingenuousness of an author who is popular throughout the world, and of whose works America is about to possess a complete and artistic translation, thanks to an enterprising publisher.

Who is this author? What novelist, very gay, very Gallic, could preoccupy a pope at the Vatican? Imagine his Holiness reading "Frere Jacques"; fancy the chief of Christendom inquiring of the author of "The Genius of Christianity" as to the health of the smiling painter of the petits bourgeois and the Parisian grisettes! It is a fact which outweighs all literary criticism, and Gregory XVI did not dream that he created in that moment a living criticism.

Paul de Kock, like Alexander Dumas the elder, was and has remained popular not only in France, but out of France. Gérard de Nerval relates, in his "Journey to the Orient," that when he passed through Vienna, in 1844, all the ladies of the social world were interested in the characters of "The Mysteries of Paris," the famous novel of Eugène Sue. They believed that they spoke French, and expressed themselves feelingly in the tongue of Prince Rodolpho, Chaurineur, or Fleur de Marie.

Today Eugène Sue is a little forgotten, we no longer hear the language of his heroes in Vienna, or elsewhere; but the stories of Paul de Kock always have readers, for the power of his gayety is persistent. "Laughter is the gift of man alone," said Rabelais, in his old French tongue. The over-delicate reproach Paul de Kock for the freedom of his humor; but had not the great Balzac also his detractors? and is it not currently said that that immortal painter of human nature did not have the gift of "artistic writing"?

Side by side with the great painters, Paul de Kock bears a strong similarity to the Flemish masters whom Louis XIV called "painters of baboons," but who have immortalized the life of their time, the era of a people. The Teniers, the Brauwers, the Van Ostades have illustrated all the manners of their world; and their smoking-rooms, their taverns, and their laugh-provoking

fairs deserve to be painted upon the walls of the Louvre, as much as the rosy canvases of a Watteau or the delicious faces of a Prudhon. In fact, it is the variety of subjects which constitutes the charm of a gallery of paintings.

Here is a man who has given a complete résumé of his time in his work. He has bestowed upon posterity a little world which has disappeared, somewhat as the Italian Fogazzarro is doing today, whom, however, Catholic and dreamer as he is, I do not compare with Paul de Kock. It is his treatment of "the little world" which pleases me. Charles Dickens also, when he illustrated the middle class or the humble people of London, reproduced this little world. The misfortunes of Mr. Pickwick might be compared to the experiences of M. Dupont at the country party, or to those of M. Choublanc in search of his wife.

Yes, a complete past seems to exist, to breathe and be reanimated, to smile, to love and hate, in the immense work of Paul de Kock. It is, today, like the picture of a Paris which has disappeared, which is abolished; of a Paris light, simple, familiar, happy, of such good humor that it will laugh at nothings. Would you like to know how the smaller tradespeople lived at the end of the last century,—those people who were so healthy and so amiable? Open Paul de Kock, and imagine a family book, illustrated by Charlet, a refrain by

Béranger! It is the image of a sane and humorous life, where pessimism has not yet committed its ravages, and where no one has dreamed of the Zarathustra of that marvellous and terrible Nietzsche!

I spoke of the Flemish painters. It is rather interesting to note that the novelist of Parisian life in the time of the Restoration and of Louis Philippe is of an origin which connects him intimately with the artists of the Low Countries. Paul de Kock proceeds to the delineation of Belleville and Romainville exactly in the manner of the Dutch painters, and he undoubtedly possessed the Dutch temperament. His father was in fact a Hollander. The elder de Kock was that banker Kock who entertained the patriots so generously at his house at Passy that he was suspected of being an agent of the royal party. He died on the scaffold, with Hébert and Anacharsis Clootz. Madame de Kock, the widow, knew the Hébertists, —de Ronsin, de Proly and de Pereyra. Her son tells the story in the novel of "The Man with Three Pairs of Trousers." The tale, this time, has a double and historic significance. But it is not safe to take it literally. I have seen the only portrait of M. de Kock the father. It is that of a tall, superb, handsome man, not in military costume, but in a coat of German cut, which is more severe than the French fashion. He wore his hair powdered, and no beard; his nose was fine and

long, and his complexion fresh and rosy, like that of the northern races. In Paris he was called the handsome Hollander, and the portrait gives ample excuse for the title. Paul de Kock was the son of a revolutionist, but he was a reactionist.

"I have seen so many changes!" he said to me, pointing to the carriageway of the boulevard, under his windows. "And so many people have fallen! There, at the corner of the theatre, a poor devil dropped with a ball in his head! I see him still!"

What would the father, Conrad de Kock, the soldier of Dumouriez, the colonel of Jemappes and of Valmy, have said to that? He had seen many such things, and, moreover, he died himself at twenty-eight. His other son, the brother of the novelist, became a famous man, a statesman and minister in Holland.

Paul de Kock was born at Passy, the 21st of May, 1793, but he was always essentially a Parisian. He was seventy years old when I knew him. He was without fixed habitation for some years; then one fine day chance led him upon the Boulevard Saint Martin, beside the theatre. No doubt you would often have noticed an old man at the window of the entresol, his elbows resting on the balcony, an embroidered cap upon his head. He had a bright eye, a face which was still handsome, long white hair, a short mustache; his cravat was carefully tied. He had the appear-

ance of a retired officer. He studied the passers-by, the carriages; he listened to the noise, he breathed the air, he observed, he enjoyed the freshness, and especially the boulevard. This was Charles Paul de Kock, or, rather, Paul de Kock, as he was popularly known.

For more than half a century Paul de Kock lived at 8 Boulevard Saint Martin, and, one looking at the other, they had seen many things. It was on this work-table, in this library, where his own complete works filled the shelves, that he wrote nearly all that he has left. The instrument of labor and the worker grew old together. How easy it is to divine, in this environment, the labor, the correct life, the gentle and calm existence of the writer,— the writer who bore so honorably and so well his title of Man of Letters!

There are three portraits in existence of Paul de Kock, which indicate admirably the three phases of this long life so well employed.

The first is a miniature by I do not know what pupil of Madame de Mirbel,— a masterpiece. These beautiful and living miniatures have been replaced by photographs, yet the most unalterable of these are more alterable than they.

This shows us a young man of thirty years, the hair black, and carefully arranged, the beard shaved, the chin blue. He is at his desk, before his papers, dressed in a green dressing-gown with black bands, such as they wore in 1820. The

dress is correct, and of a finished elegance. The shirt has frills of the fashionable sort, and there is lace on the cuffs also. It is the Paul de Kock of the Restoration,—fine talker, fine waltzer, handsome man, whom one imagines charming, whom one points at, saying, "It is he!" Jules Janin has related that in the carriage in which he rode to Paris, from Saint Etienne to the coach office, they talked of nothing but Paul de Kock.

The second portrait is a canvas by Gigoux. The man is forty to fifty years old; still robust, thoughtful, the hair a little longer, and falling over the brow, as if blown by a contrary wind, still black, the eye deep, almost meditative. One can understand, on seeing this, the melancholy touches in some of the books of Paul de Kock.

The third is the beautiful photograph of Bertall, his illustrator. It is Paul de Kock at seventy years, vigorous, solid, with square shoulders and stout legs. He leans upon his cane, less from necessity than from a feeling of propriety. He wears a white vest, his coat buttoned up, and a high cravat. He might be General Bourgachard if he were not Paul de Kock. His eyes are thoughtful, his lip ironical under the white mustache, and ready to utter a witticism,—not a mot, in the sense of the day, but an observation, a shrewd remark. The nose is straight, the brow high, and modelled by time, but not wearied; the hair is thick and fine, gray rather than white.

For this sage, who concealed his life, an entire biography might be read in these three portraits.

The child of Passy, the son of the guillotined banker who was the good friend of Hébert (Père Duchesne), was brought up as he pleased, as were all the young men of the time of the First Empire. He was destined first of all for commerce, and was placed in a banking-house. The establishment of Scherer and Finguerlin was at the corner of Rue Taitbout and the Boulevard. There, while he regulated his accounts, kept day-books, straightened his balances, Paul de Kock wrote. His employers, who gladly closed their eyes upon the clerk's manuscripts, retired, and their successor, a ferocious broker, turned the young novelist-clerk out of doors. Paul de Kock was then nineteen. He carried his novel, his first novel, back and forth through Paris; it was everywhere refused, everywhere disdained. It was called "The Child of my Wife," and Pigault-Lebrun himself might have had a good laugh over it, except that he never laughed at anything. At last, weary of useless attempts, the young man decided to issue his first novel at his own expense, and, determined to indulge no longer in such luxuries, to break his literary pen and return to his accountant's implement.

But we little know what destiny has in store for us. The future smiled upon the author; the day came when he was even offered a contract

with his publisher. A contract! What fortune! What dreams! Paul de Kock seized the contract, signed it with both hands. "I am a novelist!" he exclaimed.

He was not only a novelist, but a dramatist. He wished to frighten people, this man who always wanted to amuse his world. He created his roaring villains with black beards, before he caused the innocent ladies in jaconet gowns to blush. His melodramas — it was the melodrama then — were "Catherine de Courlande," "The Portuguese Troubadour," "The Battle of Veillane," "Madame de Valnoir."

How Sister Anne, the good Sister Anne, would have wondered at them! How the Milkmaid of Montfermeil would have wept if she could have listened to them! How Carotine would have laughed if she could have heard them, — and Piffard and Chipolette, and M. Choublanc, and M. Cherami, and the entire Gogo family!

He did some comic operas also; among others, "The Muleteer," of which Hérold composed the music. Then came the novels, the joy of an epoch, the gayety of the Restoration — better than that, of five or six reigns, the good blood of four or five generations. You will name them all, — "A Good Child," "Monsieur Dupont," "Nor Never nor Ever," and many others.

But Paul de Kock had strangled himself under that famous contract which Barba had offered him.

It made the fortune of the publisher, but not that of the author. More than once, as he grew old, I think he must have repeated: "If youth but knew! In growing old? — I do not myself understand!"

He remained always young, he died young, and knew nothing of the fierce melancholy of contemporary romance, of our realism, of that wind of despair which animates — while drying possibly, who knows? — the creations of these latter years.

"You make people shiver," he said to me one day; "but when do you amuse them?"

"It is because the moment is not gay, and the thermometer is not at the gayety point."

"As for me, at my age," replied Paul de Kock, "I shall still play with paper kites!"

I believe that he kept his word, that he went always in summer to this pretty Romainville house, of which the gardens and the fêtes were spared for some time.

Romainville! The name itself is charming, and sounds attractive, like a little festival bell. Romainville! The dinner upon the grass, the boys rolling and playing catch; while the young girls in light dresses, and the stout ladies, gather about the melon brought from the city, and laugh at the jokes and pleasantries of the little clerks on a holiday, or the middle-aged citizens who are taking an outing. The stupid donkeys which will not go must be pushed from behind, until

they decide to advance, the stubborn things! They sweat, they groan, they are beaten! The struggle with the donkeys makes part of every fête, as it does of every success.

Ah, what pretty decorations in these laugh-provoking novels! Romainville! Bagnolet! The Près Saint Gervais! It is a part of the suburbs which still smells of the country, and where the Parisians eager for verdure, for freshness, can go in search of green grass, of forgetfulness. They need to forget even the sorrows of yesterday, for in the place where the dinner is spread upon the grass the defenders of Romainville were slain by the Wurtembergers.

At the time when Paul de Kock wrote, Belleville was a village and Romainville a hamlet; one could roll in the fields, in the spot where now one would run against walls. Paul de Kock is the annalist of a fabulous time; it is as remote as that of Gregory of Tours. The Parisian of that period scarcely ever left Paris; a journey to Versailles, on the days when the fountains played, seemed more hazardous than a trip to Tunis today, — it was an event of importance, which would only be equalled now by a voyage to Samarkand. An adventure full of daring was seen in the trip from Paris to Havre, where one went to see the ocean; and many of our old Parisians, habituated to the sight of the brook in the Rue de Bac, have left this world without a glimpse of

the sea. Today all the beaches are advertised like the fashionable plays, and even have large colored notices, like the summer theatres. Ah, how far, far, this is from the Paris of Paul de Kock, of Monsieur Dupont and of My Neighbor Raymond!

But during the lifetime of Paul de Kock the Romainville of his novels still existed; at his hands it survived in the house of the romancer. They amused themselves there, as in the good old times, composing charades, executing operettas, with Paul de Kock for impressario, and Henri de Kock, the son of the popular romancer, himself a novelist and dramatist, as director,— Henri de Kock, who sang the lorette as his father celebrated the grisette. They played at swinging, at bowls, at ball, at ninepins, at all the games; even song was not neglected. Only old people really know how to laugh.

Paul de Kock, in comparison with others, could write very easily. His manuscripts were models of neatness, and guiltless of an erasure. There were entire volumes thrown upon the paper as they were to remain, without correction. The ideal of Paul de Kock was to have a flowing style. "I have the flowing style."

In his place, one might have exclaimed, "I have color," and another, "I have force." He aspired to be neither the Nile nor Niagara, but the little clear brook, which runs smiling over the

white pebbles, between dewy banks of cresses. He does not seek for images. He does not lengthen his phrases. He traces value for value, and, if his meaning is clear, that is sufficient for him. He says merely what he wishes to say, and no one need suppose that he wishes merely to amuse. He paints all that he has seen. His sketches and pictures are those of an artist who has been touched by the truth, of an ingenuous observer, of a Charlet, who would mock at the epic.

Do not disdain them, these brave and gay stories, full of verve, full of life, full of salt; and if they are coarse occasionally, and a little broad, what does it matter? These humble middle-class dramas, these comedies where the little world lives, where a corner of our society is moving, where one is jovial and in excellent health, with a suggestion of emotion, a heart which beats, and good red lips which certainly do not speak the language of a select few!

There is sunshine in this region, and the breeze brings the freshness of the lilacs and the odors of springtime. The bonnets are white, the faces are rosy; there are songs in the air; the people eat in circles and dance in circles. The grass is the accomplice of love. Forward, the clerks, the grisettes, the small tradesmen, the employés, the foot-soldiers and the cooks! Whether good or bad, the orchestra grinds away forever; the green

leaves, the blue sky, the picnic in the wood, are all yours. The dinner is finished, the basket of provisions is empty. The wine has passed from the bottles into the tumblers. They have thrown upon the grass the rinds of the melon which papa carried in his arms, and the crumbs of the pie which mamma brought in her handkerchief from rue Thevenot to Romainville. They must dance, hold each other's hands, turn, drag each other about, almost strangle; and when they have lost their breath and fall to the ground, everyone looks around with a red face, but with animation and gayety. The beautiful parties, the wild foolishness, the escapades at the Près Saint Gervais, the love-making which is carried on the length of the wheatfield, the kisses in the hedge, the adventures and misadventures of love in the fields! The omelets soufflés, the fireworks which do not go off, the torn gowns, the waffles, les mirlitons, the caterpillars in the cream, and the cream in the salad, — all these are things which only happen in the stories of Paul de Kock. All are accidents at which one laughs, that amuse without disturbing, that divert but do not pervert. They console us, and help us to forget.

How many people have you found, glued to the desks of the reading-rooms, absorbed in the novels of Paul de Kock, which others would have gladly condemned — what do I say? — would have burned as immoral. The idea of calling those good

fellows immoral! They never inspire anything but the love of good girls, full of health, who fear neither word nor gesture, — amiable companions, with whom one would always be content, and whose company one would not wish to lose. The girls of Paul de Kock have blood in their heart, and the heart on the lips. Their kisses sound frank, and their hands strike hard. They have no affectation, no false modesty, and no false sentimentality. The flowers of rhetoric, of passionate poets, have no attraction for them. They are without artificiality, and laugh as frankly as Béranger's Good Girl, who is their cousin. They sometimes bring the odor of the furnace, of the shop or the farm, but never of the hospital. If Francine or Mimi is lymphatic, Zizine has iron in her blood. They laugh in the face of consumption, and are delighted to show their white teeth. What good comrades are the women of Paul de Kock, by the side of the pale Bohemian creations of Murger!

These little people go and come, fall in love, marry, separate, make mistakes, detest each other, adore each other, make jokes, play comedies, and weep on occasion (very little and for the moral). They live, in a word! How marvellous it is! It is a race apart, in a series of literary creations, something which is only found there, which Paul de Kock has brought into the world, or, rather, which he has painted as he saw it, as it is, or, alas!

as it was. It will remain, for these volumes will live, although some have despised them. They have been read and reread by others; and the witty people say they were written for the cooks.

"The cooks? Well, and why not?" said Paul de Kock, somewhere. "I would not be ashamed to have written for the chimney-sweeps, even. That would simply prove that the chimney-sweeps know how to read."

The great writers, like Theophile Gautier, for instance, have not disdained to praise Paul de Kock; and I find in the "Portraits Contemporains" of the author of "Le Capitaine Fracasse" and of "Mademoiselle de Maupin" some important pages in which the delicate poet does justice to the popular novelist.

"We feel," he says, "that there is in him a sort of comic force, which is lacking in others. At present, he appears to us in a more serious light, if one can apply such a word to Paul de Kock. Certain of his novels produce upon us the effect of the 'Last of the Mohicans' by Fenimore Cooper. We seem to be reading the history of the Last of the Parisians."

Theodore de Banville, the poet, has not hesitated to write: —

Joy,— such was in fact the gift, marvellous and rare, which was possessed, among all others, by the inexhaustible romancer, Charles Paul de Kock; and it is through this that he holds his place among the most illustrious poets. It is through this that he

has in his laughter something of the mighty laugh of Rabelais. It is through this that he has in his veins a drop of the blood of Molière.

He knew how to laugh and to make others laugh. His domain was joy; yet the drama, and even the melodrama, have their part in his gay and natural stories. This is evident in the novel of "Sister Anne," which begins brilliantly the artistic and admirable edition which an American publisher is issuing, as a monument to the popular candor of the Gallic spirit; Sister Anne, the mute who finds speech in her dying moment, might be the story of the drama of the Fates.

At the present time a cheap edition of Paul de Kock finds as many buyers in France as the works of Victor Hugo. The Good Fellow is appreciated as well as the Great Man, in spite of the lapse of years. I once cited, in a critical article, the opinion of an English writer, without a peer, upon the author of "Sister Anne."

Bulwer, the famous author of "Pelham," and of that exciting story, "Eugene Aram," which is a powerful drama of the courts, expressed his sentiments to Paul de Kock with enthusiastic admiration. I have his letter in an autograph collection of my own. He declares that he finds in no other author a comic vein equal to that of De Kock, and he says this at the very hour when the inimitable Charles Dickens had just published in the Morning Chronicle his sketches of English life,

at the period when "Oliver Twist" was still in course of publication, and after the astonishing Mr. Pickwick had been born.

In the Edinburgh Review of next January I shall give expression to my opinion upon your talent in a manner which ought to be agreeable to you. If there are any restrictions, it will be the fault of my editor and not of myself; but I hope that there will be none. I do not know how to convey to you my sympathy for your sorrow. Genius has been given to man as a compensation for his misfortunes and his inevitable torments. Your work reflects life in a fashion so amiable and so indulgent, that it evidently mirrors a joyous character and a satisfied heart. Excuse me for writing you this letter in English, but I do not know your language well enough to express sufficiently in French my enthusiastic admiration and my profound respect.

I am, dear sir, your grateful and devoted friend,

EDWARD BULWER-LYTTON.

This is the opinion of the eminent English novelist, upon the popular story-teller, the great entertainer of clerks in novelty shops, and also of the great ladies, who gladly sent to the circulating libraries in search of the volumes of Paul de Kock. I have had looked up, in the Edinburgh Review, the article which Bulwer-Lytton promised with so much friendly feeling to Charles Paul de Kock. It was published in the number of January, 1837, and has for title, "Paul de Kock: Complete Works of Paul de Kock (Paris, 1834). 'Zizine,' by Charles Paul de Kock; four volumes, 12mo, Bruxelles, 1836." In fact, it is of "Zizine" that Bulwer speaks especially, mingling with his appre-

ciation the name of Wordsworth, and comparing the gay, bright literature of Paul de Kock with what he calls the literature of the morgue. The grisettes of the novelist are contrasted with the sentimentalities of the Lélia of George Sand, and of the ascetic deprivations of Balzac's "Peau de Chagrin." I quote the criticism of the English novelist, but do not reproduce it. It might be found and reprinted, as a matter of curiosity. It is evident that Bulwer has seized the real quality and naturalness of Paul de Kock's talent. They are certainly stories of a "joyous character" and a "satisfied heart." In rereading them, one finds himself in the presence of an impenitent optimism which defies all criticism. One seems to be reading the stories of a vanished time. It is moral archæology. One perceives in these books a France smiling and light, a Paris which is a good child, a people frankly natural, whose life is full of sweet repose. "When I read M. de Florian," said Marie Antoinette, "it seems to me that I am drinking whey." Paul de Kock is not whey; sometimes he seems a little blue: but he has the cordial good humor of the drinkers of Charlet. He is simple and idealistic in his manner. The Colonel de Berly, when his nephew, Gustave the Good-for-nothing, assured him that he hoped to find in marriage the happiness he had vainly sought in the whirl of intrigues and folly (this is the manner of Paul de Kock), replied: "My dear, youth must

pass. You have had a good time. You have sown your wild oats; so much the better. That reassures me in regard to your future."

This is the morality of Paul de Kock. It is that of Pigault-Lebrun, the author of "The Child of the Carnival." It is even that of Béranger, who drinks, down there in his corner, to the god of the good-natured people. It is this morality which displeased Bulwer-Lytton a little. Ernest Renan, who detested Béranger, certainly considered it mediocre; and yet there is something of this "tant mieux" in Renanism.

I have just indicated the paradoxical criticism of Bulwer, who compares Paul de Kock to Balzac, and even nearly sacrifices Balzac to Paul de Kock. There was a time when for readers all the French romances were written by Paul de Kock, as all the comedies played at all the theatres were written by M. Scribe[1]; of this a certain anecdote, which I have taken an ironical pleasure in relating, is a diverting testimony.

One morning Balzac, the sovereign master, was taking a walk in the suburbs of Paris. He descended the slopes of Livry, toward Montfermeil, and in order to shorten the road turned to walk through a ploughed field. A garde cham-

[1] The theatre even has appropriated the characters of Paul de Kock; and as they have played pieces entitled, "Le Chasseur de Béranger" and "Les Femmes de Gavarni," so the Théâtre Dejazet presented, on the 17th of July, 1874, a vaudeville in four acts, "Les Femmes de Paul de Kock," by Léon and François Beauvallet.

pêtre suddenly appeared, threatening suits at law, and inviting this man who braved all the ordinances to follow him.

"Follow you! Where, then?"

"To Monsieur the Mayor."

It was an adventure. Balzac loved them as much as did Eugène Sue, Frederic Soulié or Dumas. They went to the Mayor's office, therefore, and the garde champêtre explained the situation. It was a clear case of violation of territory.

"Your name?" inquired the Mayor gravely.

"Honoré de Balzac."

"Your profession?"

"I am a man of letters."

"Are you Monsieur de Balzac, the writer?" inquired the Mayor, astonished.

"Yes, monsieur."

"What, monsieur!" said the magistrate, with respect; "is it you who have written the novels that have been so successful?"

The great Tourangeau bowed, flattered at this homage to the "Comédie Humaine."

The Mayor turned, and addressed the astonished guard in a tone of severity: "You would have done well to ask monsieur's name before arresting him. It is Monsieur de Balzac — *Monsieur de Balzac* — MONSIEUR DE BALZAC — whose famous romance has done so much good to our community!"

Balzac did not yet comprehend. But he under-

stood very quickly, when the Mayor of Montfermeil added, —

"Yes, it is your masterpiece, Monsieur de Balzac, — 'The Milkmaid of Montfermeil'; and we are proud to have inspired it in you!"

The author of "Eugènie Grandet" and "Poor Relations" was protected against the complaint of a garde champêtre by the renown of the author of "Monsieur Dupont"!

"My faith!" he said, with his big hearty laugh, when he told the incident. "Perhaps I ought to have written 'The Milkmaid of Montfermeil.'"

Charles Monselet, an author of refinement, who has written a masterpiece, a volume on the eighteenth century, one day paid to Paul de Kock such a beautiful recognition of his genius as the mayor of Montfermeil had given Balzac. The poem is called, "A Testimonial given to Charles Paul de Kock, the author of 'Sister Anne'": —

O Paul de Kock, whom roses fresh adorn,
Time's outrages will never scar thy fame;
Thou wilt survive all days morose, and scorn.
Go, gay philosopher, for Spring's thy name!

Men will reread fore'er thy lines of joy, —
Vast Odyssey, where custard reigns supreme!
And e'en the Pope, with pleasure sans alloy,
Must in the Vatican thy tales esteem.

In thine own day, when the illuminant
Would tell the world it must forget sweet wine,
Thy love-songs speak to hearts exuberant,
And Lover's thoughts to rendezvous incline.

Thou seest all parties pass, indifferent,
Nor ever for their songs have tuned thy lute;
But one and all salute thee reverent,
And quick to all, thou answerest joyous, Zut!

Good times will ever wider spread thy fame,
When this gay world no longer knows cabal!
Thou'lt classic be, and future ages claim
The right to treasure volumes of Barba.

A statue, then, O king of the coquette,
Will sure preserve the face to us so dear!
And one will see Tapotte and Bastringuette
Beside thee shelling chestnuts without fear.

In bas-relief, the figures of your tales
In joyous dance do homage to your muse;
The druggist, Schtrack the Tailor, never fails,
And Vermillon, who knows good paints to use.

And joyous crowds of the young Kockolites
To Saint Gervais each Sunday, sure, will run,
To do thee honor, banish all despites,
Montalembert only will not join the fun!

Montalembert had disappeared, and could not assist at the inauguration of that statue which Charles Monselet[1] predicted to Paul de Kock. Statue? No: it is a simple bust, but smiling.

[1] The verses of Monselet finish in this way: —

O Paul de Kock, of whom the verve supreme
Leads us to ball, and e'en to violin,
Pursue us still, and in a plate of cream
Upset the immortal Baisemon once again!

The wine à quinze, and love not looking down,
Mimi and Galatee, in ribbons gay,
Towards the thatched cottage of antique renown,
With hazelnuts and sweethearts, long we stay!

"The man of letters needs only a bust in the corner of the library of his native town," said Armide Beaune.

Paul de Kock has his bust in the public place, and the young men can stand near and copy the inscription. The old story-teller ought to be satisfied. He always loved youth.

"We must live and die young," he said truly. He would have repeated with Béranger: —

> Oh! how the old are wearied!
> In spite of me I'm like the rest!
>
> Oh! how the old are wearied!
> Nothing to do — they do that best!

I hear it still, I see him again. How long ago it is! I was then very young, and Paul de Kock said to me, —

"Be always young! Your generation mixes in too much black. Look around you, there is rose-color in life, and there are roses!"

He was very proud of his work and of his roses. One day he was at the place of the publisher, Michel Levy. He was obliged to wait.

> Group still adored! when the grisette profane
> Proceeds to don again her lover's cap,
> And her light bonnet floats upon his cane,
> While Mother Godichon smiles at good hap!
>
> And thou, his son, Henri, thou noble man!
> In fulness of the future is thy crown;
> And when success has reached its broadest span,
> Read o'er "Monsieur Dupont" in thy renown!
>
> CHARLES MONSELET, 1857.

"Tell him that Paul de Kock is here," he said haughtily; "I will not wait any longer."

He has placed an epigram in each of his works, a Latin citation, taking Cicero and Seneca — astonishing fact! — for his godfathers. He liked to put his philosophy in his songs also.

Many men who live
Can never forgive,
  They find trifles alarming;
But me, if you praise me,
Uphold me, upraise me!
  My humor is charming!

There is a little of the philosophy of Bagnolet and the Gardin-Cure in this. But it is pleasant, and, to recall one of the novels of Paolo di Kocko, it is "Bon Enfant." The good bonhomme, Chrysale, would have applauded that, at the supper of Auteuil, in drinking fresh, but in drinking pure; for at that time they knew nothing of the evils of adulteration and alcoholism.

Charles Paul de Kock died in 1871, the year after Charles Dickens; so that M. Dupont and Mr. Pickwick were wept almost at the same time. There was a discourse by a Protestant clergyman over his coffin, at Boulevard Saint Martin; then the cortège started for the cemetery of Belleville. A journal of the day says that the birds were singing in the branches, and the funeral of the old story-teller took place in the midst of weather which was clear and smiling, like his life. Over

his tomb an orator, a singer — Émile Bélakere — said: "It is the first time that he ever made his friends weep."

America has done right to adopt him in such generous degree, — the son of France!

One evening, when some friends were dining with Alexander Dumas the elder, they began to discuss the question as to which of the novelists of the day would live longest.

"Which one will live longest? Surely, it will be Balzac."

"No," replied an author; "it will be George Sand."

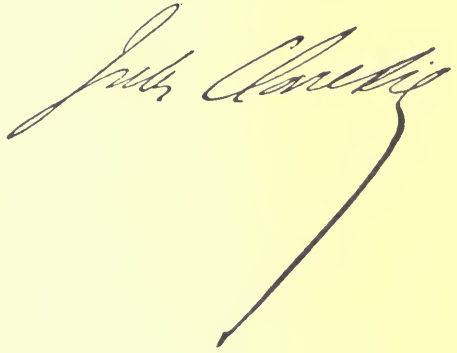
"And you, Dumas, and Eugène Sue?"

Alexander Dumas replied,—

"Who knows? It may be Paul de Kock."

And today do we not turn to Paul de Kock rather than to the "Bouvard et Pécuchet" of Gustave Flaubert, and the wedding at the Louvre in "L'Assommoir" of Émile Zola?

The laughter of Paul de Kock is not dead.



CHAPTER I

A Midnight Walk. My Aunt's Five Hundred Francs

At all the theatres the plays were played out, the restaurateurs were closing their cafés, the tradesmen had long since closed their shops. The traffic of the streets had lessened, and the foot-passengers had become few and far between. The cabs rolled swiftly along with their last fares. The street reflectors were burning brightly, while the houses began to look more and more sombre as the gas within them was extinguished. The streets of Paris, as well as the good inhabitants of that capital, were about to enjoy the hours of repose.

Repose, however, may be likened to good weather in that it is never general, for one may often enjoy it in Paris when there is war in another part of the globe; and when we are enjoying a most mild and agreeable temperature, within a hundred leagues of us, perhaps, a storm destroys the harvests or a tempest submerges vessels. Since peace and fine weather cannot be universal, let us seek to enjoy each one of these things when we possess it and not trouble our-

selves, at the same time, about what our neighbors are doing, and how they are faring in these respects.

A gentleman who had no desire to sleep walked back and forth in the almost silent and deserted streets of Paris. For more than an hour he had been pacing the boulevards, from the Rue du Temple to the Rue de Poissoniére ; but as it was impossible for him to occupy all his time in making this round he occasionally walked up as far as the Faubourgs without, however, appearing to notice where he was going; but presently he would stop, look all about him, and mutter to himself, —

" What the devil am I doing here ? " Then he would immediately retrace his steps to the boulevards he had just left.

The gentleman who pursued this eccentric course at such an untimely hour of the night might have been about thirty years old. He was of middle height, and rather stout than thin. His face was neither homely nor handsome; his eyes were a trifle round, and too prominent; his nose, although not flat, had neither the nobleness of the Greek nor the seductive charm of the aquiline. The gentleman had, nevertheless, what would be called a striking physiognomy. He possessed the art of rendering his features mobile, and of making them express any sentiment or feeling he wished to seem to experience. This is a talent as valuable

in the world as in the theatre. We play the comedy everywhere, and there are people at court, through the city, in palaces, in drawing-rooms and boudoirs, even in antechambers, who are supreme in the art of feigning what they do not feel.

The costume of our promenader was neither elegant nor shabby. His dress was that of a man who is accustomed to society, but who does not care to call attention to the cut of his coat or the color of his trousers. In fact, his bearing corresponded to his dress, and indicated no pretension. Perhaps you will say to me that a man does not assume a lolling air, or a light and attractive manner, when walking alone and so late on the boulevards of Paris. I will have the honor to reply to you, that I am painting the portrait of a man as he was ordinarily, and that I have not waited until this moment to make his acquaintance.

Now that you have some idea of this personage, would you like to know what occupied him upon the boulevards so late at night, and why he did not return home and go to bed? To discover this, let us listen to him as he talks to himself. He walked on, with his two hands in his pockets, his manner as tranquil as if it were only eight o'clock in the evening.

"I had a presentiment of what has happened to me! I did not want to visit that little Delphine. I might still have my five hundred francs in my

pocket. But she is so charming, this little Delphine! She wrote me such a sweet note! Am I still silly enough to be fooled with all that, when I know the world, and especially women?

"If I had put only a hundred crowns in my pocket, I would still have something left. But no: I wished to play the gentleman, and I have gambled like a fool! The little gentleman who won from me turned back the king mighty often! Ahem! That's not clear! What is clear is that I have not a sou; that my landlord has put me out of his furnished house, because I didn't pay. For four miserable louis! The Arab! I was going to pay him yesterday, with the five hundred francs my old aunt sent me; then the invitation of this little Delphine came to upset all my plans of wisdom. Poor Dubourg! You are incorrigible, my friend, and yet you are old enough to begin to know better."

Here Dubourg — for now we know his name — drew a snuffbox from his pocket and paused to take a pinch.

"O, my sole consolation, my faithful companion!" he went on, regarding his snuffbox with an air that was almost tender; "it is fortunate that you are only shell, for otherwise I should have pawned you long ago. — But let me think. What the devil am I to do? I have no employment, these government officials are so absurd! I only earned fifteen hundred francs, and I wasn't

going to work harder than my superior, who had twice as much. In fact, I should have worked only half as hard. As my under chief came down at noon and left at four o'clock, and passed the time between these hours in reading the papers, cutting his pens, gossiping, warming himself at the stove in winter, enjoying the fresh air in summer, I thought it quite proper to arrive no sooner than he, and to stay no later, to spend an hour over the Moniteur, three-quarters of an hour over the Constitutionnel, and five minutes over the Débats; to look at my pen a long time before dipping it in the ink; to gaze at the business before me, but not touch it; to turn over a bundle of papers for an hour, and put it back in its place without ever having intended to write a line; finally, to consume as much time getting a bit of lunch as it would have required to go from Paris to Saint Cloud.

"This conduct was dictated by a spirit of justice, but it was not according to the taste of my chiefs. These gentlemen wished to force me to long hours of work, in order that they might have more leisure. They considered me very shiftless, because I wanted to imitate them. They complained of me to the ministry, and I was dismissed. To be sure, they offered me a little later the privileges of reëntering as a probationer, but I did not consider myself worthy of such a favor.

"I entered a banking house. Ah, what a difference! There, the chiefs set the example of hard work. From the first clerk to the last, every employé entered the office at eight o'clock and stayed till five, and returned at seven to remain until ten. During this time there was not one moment of rest; it was always writing or figuring; if a little conversation was permitted, it was only in copying a letter, or opening an account. No holidays! Every day postboys coming in and postboys going out. No one could do too much; and one day, when I left the office some minutes before ten o'clock, a cursed German, who had already passed forty-five years of his life over a ledger, said, looking at his watch,—

"'You are in one pig hurry dis efening!'

"Good Heavens! I could not endure it there! This animal life destroyed my health; and one fine morning, when they gave me a reprimand, because I had gone to take a little tonic at the neighboring café, I seized my hat and bade farewell to the houses of banking and commerce.

"I thought I would like to be a notary, but I was too absent-minded. I allowed a record of death to be signed for a marriage contract, and a power of attorney for a will, and they decided I had mistaken my calling.

"I had a place with an old attorney. Ah! that was pretty good for a while. He had a wife, already growing old, who loved the promenade,

and she chose me for her cavalier. The husband was thus freed from accompanying his wife, and found it excellent that I should go everywhere with her. I believe he would have named me first clerk, if I would have agreed to promenade madame all my life. But I grew tired of beauing around a figure à la Pompadour, and a face that might have been inside a chief justice's cap! I ceased to be attentive to madame, the husband fell into a bad humor, and sent me away. Oh, times! Oh, manners!

"From that day I renounced office work. I felt in my heart a noble independence, an intense love of liberty. I applied myself now to doing nothing,—a superb avocation, and one for which everyone is fitted; a charming profession when it is supported by a long entry in the government ledger, representing investments in bonds. Unfortunately, I am only entered on the ledgers of my tailor, my bootmaker and my restaurant-keeper! I am an orphan. My parents left me little, and that little could not last long, especially with me; for I am neither avaricious, economical nor prudent. I want money only for the pleasure of spending it. My father — honest Breton! — followed the profession of medicine. He should have been rich, but probably in his time there were not enough colds, fevers and bad airs. He left me only a respectable name which, in spite of my follies, I wish to keep respectable. One may be honest, though rather a worthless fellow.

"When I had spent my modest heritage I felt myself a philosopher. I had a desire to write like Seneca, in scorn of riches. But Seneca had a fortune of forty millions when he wrote in that way. He understood his subject better than I who had not a sou. Then, as we should write only of what we know, and I know nothing of riches, I have not written.

"Fortunately, I have an old aunt in Brittany who has never married. The good woman has only a moderate fortune, but she has not abandoned her nephew. It is true I have written her very touching letters. Poor dear woman! she believes me married. My faith! Not knowing what means to employ to obtain money, in my last letter I made myself all at once husband and father of a family. By the stroke of a pen, I have three children — triplets!

"That is how I happened to receive the note for five hundred francs, which I lost at écarté — cursed écarté! I have sworn never to play again. I am in bad luck this month! But how could I resist? I arrived at the house of this little Delphine. Since she left the theatre she receives the best people in Paris,— all artists, journalists, authors, English noblemen, Russians, and Tartars — ah, yes, Tartars! I think that gentleman with whom I played was a bit of a Greek! To pass eighteen times in succession — that is too much. And that other imbecile, who killed himself to offer

me punch every time I lost, as if I could drink the value of five hundred francs! Ah, my poor aunt, if you knew where your money had gone! The worst of it is that she will not send me any more for a long time. I cannot make a confinement every month, though I've given myself a wife to soften my aunt's heart. I have already attributed to her two illnesses, and the triplets have endured every accident of childhood. I myself have had inflammation of the lungs and jaundice. But there shall be an end of all this! No, my poor aunt, you shall not be importuned any more. No! You shall no longer be deprived of so many little comforts for your rascal of a nephew. I have abused your confidence too much. I blush that I have depended on it so often. I feel in my heart a noble pride, and when I think of your last gift of five hundred francs! I've been stuck on the fourth six times. Oh, it is shocking!"

Dubourg walked a little more quickly. He took his hands out of his pockets, as if furious at not finding anything there, but calmed himself at length, resumed his ordinary gait, and presently cried out: "But what the devil shall I do?"

At that moment there passed him one of those persons whose business it is to remove the ill-smelling and offensive offal of our city life. They work at night, because they deal with objects we avoid in the daytime. The man had a basket on his back and a hook in his hand.

"There at least is a resource," commented Dubourg, observing the man under the street lamp. "But I confess I have not yet the courage to make use of it. Though some author has said, 'It is not the profession that honors the man, but the man the profession,' I doubt whether anyone would honor me much if I held that little hook, even if I had with the basket the wisdom of Cato, the clemency of Titus and the virtues of Marcus Aurelius.

"Besides, I have some talents, and I am not yet reduced to that. I love the arts; I adore them! I was born to be an artist. I do not know how to draw, I cannot play any instrument, and I cannot make verses very easily; but in spite of that I love painting, music and poetry. If I went on the stage, I believe I should be a success. But it is a little late, at thirty, to make your début. Then, too, how would it do for the son of a doctor of Rennes to mount the boards of a theatre? But why not? Louis XIV did it. He played before his court; and surely, if I had been in Racine's place, far from dissuading him from his fancy, I should have created for him superb rôles. Our authors of today would not be so devoid of tact. Also, our authors of today are rich, while those of Racine's time were poor.

"But I cannot make my début tomorrow, and tomorrow I must dine. A desperate question to answer, when I have neither money nor credit.

Never mind, Dubourg! Don't be discouraged. Keep up your gayety, the coolness which has never abandoned you yet. Remember that it is fine to know how to endure misfortune; that a great heart only shows courage in disaster. Ah, yes! I can say this very well while my stomach is full of the cakes and punch and biscuits from mademoiselle's table, but when I am hungry I am afraid I may be a bad philosopher.

"In misfortune we have recourse to our friends. But in misfortune we have no friends. Still, sometimes men are not such egoists as they seem to be. Ah, how could I forget him! Frederic! Yes, he alone would be useful to me. Frederic is only twenty years old. He still sees the world as we see it at that age, and when eighteen years of that time have been passed under the eyes of a father and a tutor. Frederic is good, generous, sensitive, — too sensitive, indeed! But I am not the one to blame him for yielding too much to the promptings of his heart. He has obliged me several times; — never mind, he will do so again, I am sure, if he can. I must find Frederic."

Dubourg, by a mechanical movement, put his hand to his watch pocket to know the hour. Then he sighed, exclaiming: "Unlucky dog! you have never been able to keep one a week. Ah, my poor aunt! If I only had that five hundred francs."

The night grew black. Drops of rain began to fall. The cabs had ceased to break the silence of

the night. The street lamps threw only a feeble and vacillating light. "It must be very late," said Dubourg, looking about him. "Frederic lives in the hotel with his father, the Count of Montreville. How dare I present myself there now? The Count, his father, is a little severe. He is not a comedy father, to wind about your finger. They say, on the contrary, that he exacts from his son the most implicit obedience, and that the latter trembles before him. Oh, no doubt his severity is exaggerated; besides, he scarcely knows me. I have gone quite frequently to the hotel, but he has rarely seen me. Frederic's apartment is in another part of the building anyway; so I'll go on."

Dubourg, who had finally emerged from the circle he had been traversing so long, turned his steps eagerly towards the Rue de Provençe, where the hotel of the Count of Montreville was situated.

The nearer he approached the dwelling of Frederic, the fainter grew his hope of seeing him before the morrow. Ought he to disturb the entire hotel at that hour? In awaking the son he must waken the father, and it certainly would not be a favorable introduction to the Count, to rouse him at two o'clock in the morning.

Dubourg reasoned thus with himself, but kept walking on just the same, like the lover who never wishes to see again the maiden who has been false to him; yet he walks back and forth before her home, and ends by entering her presence, still re-

peating, "I will not see her!" Thus it is reason which counsels, but passion which guides us! Poor humans! Are we to be blamed, then, if passion so often leads us astray?

As he approached the hotel the eyes of Dubourg were agreeably surprised by the sight of a double line of carriages, which made the street brilliant with their lanterns. He quickened his pace. The carriages were in the greatest number before the hotel of the Count of Montreville. The large porte cochère was open, the court filled with landaus, coaches and vis-à-vis. The coachmen chatted together, the servants ran back and forth, the valets swore at everything. The obscurity of the night was driven away by the lamps on the spur-stones and on the grand staircase. Delicious music floated on the air, from within the hotel, where the beautiful salon glittered with the light of a thousand candles, and contrasted with the melancholy silence which reigned a little farther away.

Dubourg no longer walked: he ran, he leaped, he flew. The lights, the noise of the crowd, the sound of the instruments playing for the square dances, chased from his spirit the somewhat serious reflections which had begun to weigh upon him.

"It is an evening party!" he cried. "A ball! What an imbecile I am! Surely, this is Tuesday, the Count's reception day, and he gives most delightful entertainments. Frederic has invited me several times, because he wished to present me to

his father. Ah, it depended only upon myself to be introduced into most delightful circles, and to meet people who would have pushed me in fine society. But, alas! I could not be wise, and tear myself from those cursed billiards. Wait! I recognize that. It is by Rossini,—a three-step! I danced it at Vauxhall with a big blonde."

Dubourg entered the court. He passed the carriages, the lackeys, the coachmen. No one paid the slightest attention to him, and if he had been in evening dress he could have mingled with the guests, could have danced, or taken a hand at écarté, without meeting the host; for at these large reunions it is impossible for the master of the house to be certain of having seen and greeted every one he has received.

Dubourg remained outside, before the large salon where the dancing was going on. He stepped away from the stairway covered with lamps, in order not to be too plainly in sight, and watched the ballroom and the dancers from the shadow of a large coach. He was for a moment tempted to enter the salon; but, glancing at his dress, he felt that it was not the time to present himself to the Count, who was something of a stickler for etiquette. He wore a blue coat with metal buttons, boots, and a black tie. That might do very well at the house of Mademoiselle Delphine, where he went to play écarté and to talk nonsense with his hostess; but it would not be a fitting garb in

which to present himself at the reception of M. de Montreville.

Dubourg murmured again, glancing from his costume to the dancing figures within the hall: —

"Ah, if I had only kept my aunt's five hundred francs, I could easily have been the best-looking gentleman there."

Many of the windows were open on account of the heat, and Dubourg watched the dancers, observing the ladies with pleasure as they passed back and forth. Presently he noticed a green table in the smaller salon, at which two middle-aged gentlemen had just seated themselves. Soon the players were surrounded by a little crowd, and the table was covered with gold.

In order to look more easily into the little salon, Dubourg mounted behind the carriage near which he stood. In this way he could see the game perfectly, and even mark the play of one of the gentlemen, who sat directly opposite the window.

"They are lucky fellows," he said to himself. "They are playing écarté. The game is warm! There are at least thirty louis on the table. If I still had that money of my aunt's, I could match them easily. But what am I saying? If I ever touch cards again! Wait! they are playing the very game on which I lost, and I ought to have won. It should be played according to rule. What is he doing now? He is going to ask for the cards!"

In his excitement Dubourg forgot that he was in the court and mounted behind a carriage. He began to shout:—

"Don't ask! Play that! Play that, I tell you! I'll be responsible for it!"

The voice of Dubourg filled the players with astonishment. They turned, looked about them, and inquired the cause of the disturbance.

"Who is that interfering?" asked the old gentleman whose turn it was to play. "Has he more on the game than I have, and does that give him the right to speak so? Answer me, gentlemen!"

"The voice was from the court," said a young man near the window.

"From the court—from the court! And are those rascals of lackeys allowed to watch us, and speak as they please?"

The old gentleman, with hair powdered white, rose, and looked into the court. Dubourg jumped hastily down from the carriage, and the movement which this gave to the vehicle startled the horses so that they beat the pavement with their hoofs, and tried to break away. The sleepy coachmen rubbed their eyes and roused themselves, believing the ball was over; those who had been gossiping ran and mounted to their places; and the men in the street, seeing the movement near the hotel, hurried to do likewise; while the coachman and guard of the carriage from which Dubourg had jumped down endeavored to quiet their

horses and keep them from disturbing the entire line. While this was going on Dubourg walked quietly the length of the house, disgusted with himself. "Must I always be doing something idiotic?" he murmured. "I have thrown about thirty coachmen and as many lackeys into a state of excitement, and have got myself nearly crushed to death by the horses besides, and all because I wished to advise that old gentleman, who doesn't know the game, and who deals the cards when he should play. Well, I've learned a lesson, and I'll bother myself no more about other people's affairs."

In walking along the wall Dubourg had stopped before the door of a basement room, as a valet was coming out to discover the cause of the noise in the court.

He was opposite Dubourg, who recognized him immediately as the attendant of Frederic, and hastened to stop him.

"Where is your master, Germain?"

"Ah, is it you, monsieur?" exclaimed the valet, who knew Dubourg, as he had often seen him visiting his young master. "Are you coming to the ball?"

"No, no: I don't wish to dance. Where is your master, I asked you."

"Oh, Monsieur Frederic is dancing. There are lots of pretty girls in there, and you know Monsieur Frederic is susceptible."

"The devil! I wanted to speak to him. I have something very important to say to him, and at the same time I don't want to disturb him, or to go into the ballroom. You see I am not in evening dress."

"Listen, monsieur. I can take you to Monsieur Frederic's apartment, and you can wait there quietly till he comes."

"That's a delicious idea, Germain. Show me to Frederic's room as quickly as possible."

Germain took a candle and conducted Dubourg, who was delighted that he had found a quiet spot where he could finish the night. The valet, who had seen his master show great friendliness for Dubourg, was certain that he would not be blamed for what he had done.

They reached the apartment of the young man, which was quite a distance from the ballroom, so that the music could scarcely be heard there.

"Shall I tell my master that you are here?" asked Germain, placing his candle on the table.

"No, it is not necessary," replied Dubourg. "I will read until he comes. Oh, I am not in any special hurry. Let him dance as long as he pleases."

Germain went out, leaving Dubourg alone. He stretched himself on a great couch, and threw the book he had taken far from him.

"To the devil with books!" he murmured, while he sought the most comfortable position for

sleeping. "It is time that I rested. I have won out pretty well. Dance away, you others. I prefer this couch, especially when I came so near sleeping in the street. Here I am installed with Monsieur le Comte de Montreville, who has an income of at least thirty thousand livres, and who has only one son, whose friend I am, and whose education I would like to complete. They have poured a lot of things into his head, and have left out the most essential of all,— a knowledge of the human heart, and especially of the feminine heart. As I am learned in this particular direction, I can do something for this good Frederic and teach him to know the world, so that he can make his way as I have done."

While he was talking to himself Dubourg fell into a doze, and it was not five minutes after he had stretched himself on the couch before he was sleeping profoundly.

CHAPTER II

The Count of Montreville. A Fashionable Reception

We begin to make acquaintance with the Count of Montreville at a period when he had reached the age of sixty years. The descendant of a noble and wealthy family, this gentleman had seen service in the army, had married, had retired, and had fortunately managed to escape the storms of the Revolution, which had proved fatal to so many of his order.

The Count was a small thin man, short of stature, whose cold and austere physiognomy inspired respect. He was neither lacking in wit, nor was he infected with a mass of those ridiculous prejudices for things gone by, which some of our old men possess in such an extravagant degree that they would like to bring back into fashion all sorts of bygone monstrosities, such, for instance, as hooped petticoats and bag wigs.

Neither could M. de Montreville be reckoned among the very large number of people who evince no desire for progress either in civilization or national prosperity and who wish to go back while everyone else is advancing; he followed the

impulse of his time, and, wise in the midst of fools, blamed only those who from exaggeration, personal feeling, or incapacity, troubled the water of a river of which all human effort could not stop the flow.

The Count had been severely educated by his father. He was early taught obedience, and wished to find the same submission in his son. At the age of six the little Frederic lost his mother. The Count had no desire to marry again. He had an heir to his name, and that satisfied him. He placed Frederic in one of the best schools in the capital. At fourteen the young man had won several prizes, for he was endowed with a rare intelligence. His education was not finished, but his father feared that at his age he might form some injurious intimacy. He wanted him at home also, and wished to accustom him to a more complete obedience. He removed him from school, therefore, and gave him a tutor.

The tutor whom the Count selected for his son, and with whom we shall later become very well acquainted, was neither a learned man nor one of original ideas. He had, in fact, no such endowment, but was completely under the control of the Count, so that he would not dare to take his pupil for a walk without previously asking permission of M. de Montreville. That is why he was put in charge of Frederic's education, in spite of his lack of fitness in other directions.

The Count loved his son, but he would have been shocked at the idea of revealing to him his tender feeling, and he would have considered that a loss of dignity and a consequent failure of Frederic's respect must follow, if he spoke to him with the simple kindness of a friend. Yet he should have remembered that a father is the first friend whom nature gives, and should the respect he demands of us banish confidence and intimacy? Frederic loved his father, but he trembled in his presence. He was accustomed from infancy never to discuss a point with him, to obey his slightest wishes with promptness. Although he had grown to young manhood, he had retained his habit of passive submission, and still felt a timidity in his father's presence which prevented him from revealing his heart to him frankly. But in justice to the Count of Montreville, it must be confessed that he did not abuse his power over his son. When the boy was eighteen years old, finding his education complete, he sent away the tutor, and, calling his son to his presence, spoke to him as follows: —

"Frederic, I am pleased with you. You have repaid me for the care spent upon your education, and I have nothing to complain of in your character; but you have reached an age when you should begin to know the world. From this time on, I wish you to understand that you have perfect liberty in every way. You will continue to live

in the hotel with me, but you will have your apartments in the main part of the house on the side facing the street; mine, as you know, face the court. In this way you can come and go at any hour without disturbing me. My steward has orders to give you money whenever you ask for it. I know you, and I am sure you will not abuse this privilege. You are at an age when pleasure is usually a temptation. Enjoy yourself to the full; try all the follies of your youth. I mean those which injure neither the heart nor the spirit.

"You are susceptible; you adore all women: but this transport will last only a short time. Be very careful in the relationships which you establish with men of your own age. Do not yield too quickly to friendship. One should be more careful in the choice of a friend than in that of a mistress. I shall not lose sight of you entirely. I hope that the principles I have taught you will keep you from every evil excess, and that I shall not have cause to repent the liberty I have given you."

Frederic was deeply touched by this discourse, and would have liked to throw himself into his father's arms; but the Count repressed this impulse of tenderness which his own heart shared, and merely extended his hand to Frederic, and allowed him to press it between his own. There was a little unsteadiness in his voice when he added,—

"In a few years I shall decide upon your future course. I will try and find you a suitable wife, but we have not come to that yet. Enjoy your youth, and do not abuse it."

The Count hastened to quit his son after saying these words, for the conversation had touched him. He felt a tear moisten his eyelid, and it would have shocked him to betray to Frederic his real sentiment.

Two years had rolled away since this conversation, during which Frederic had become his own master, and had followed the first impulse of his heart. Possessed of a soul ardent and sensitive, Frederic had experienced very early the temptations of love. At eighteen most young people say, "I must love," as they say, "I must dance," "I must play cards," "I must ride horseback." But the youthful count did not think of love so lightly. His fresh young heart loved, or believed it loved, ardently, and demanded a return in kind; but falseness filled him with anguish, and he could not forget the unfaithfulness of one to whom he had given his love.

Frederic had a fine figure and a charming face, full of sweetness and nobility. His eyes expressed all that his heart experienced, but he had not acquired the light tone and the free and elegant manners of the fashionable young men of the day. He did not swing upon his heels in speaking, he did not smile into the mirror, he did not say

those brilliant nothings which raise a furore in the drawing-room, and he did not gaze passionately into the eyes of the ladies and murmur, "You are adorable." Those swaggering and cavalier manners were approved by the goddess Fashion; and, as the ladies follow her decree before all, they criticised Frederic, found him sentimental, and even a trifle awkward. They shrugged their shoulders when he was mentioned. "Oh, he is not bad, but he needs forming a little."

A fashionable poseuse cannot attach herself to an unformed boy. She may allow herself to cherish a fancy for him, but it is only the experienced and really graceless fellow who can arouse in her a great passion. That is why poor Frederic was always betrayed, and had constant trouble with his love affairs.

It was at Tortoni's café that Frederic had made the acquaintance of Dubourg, and that day the philosopher, who had money in his pocket, threw the whole place into an uproar because he had invited four friends to dine with him. Some strangers were annoyed at the noise these gentlemen made, and tried to compel them to be quiet. Dubourg's only answer was to throw in their faces the remains of his bowl of punch. They rose, making a great outcry. Threats were exchanged, and during the excitement Dubourg's four friends thought it prudent to withdraw.

Dubourg, indignant at the conduct of the

cowards who abandoned him, continued to face his adversaries alone; and Frederic, placing himself at his side, offered to serve him as second. Dubourg accepted, and there was a duel next day. Dubourg's antagonist was slightly wounded and there were no other consequences; but the duel cemented the friendship which had begun to form between the two young men. Dubourg, although nearly ten years older than the young count, was far from being as thoughtful or mature as he. His gayety, however, pleased Frederic, who had often need of the sallies of his friend in order to forget the unfaithfulness of his fair ones.

Now that we have made the acquaintance of the Count of Montreville and his son, we can enter his salons, where the most brilliant company was assembled, because, as Dubourg remarked, it was his reception day.

The company was scattered through several salons, all brilliant with the light of many candles. Some danced, some were playing cards. Here and there little groups were engaged in conversation, and others walked up and down or stood at the windows for a breath of air. The heat was very great in the little room where they played écarté, and it was almost impossible to get through the crowd of those who were betting.

The ladies were remarkable for the elegance, and sometimes for the originality, of their dress. As a rule, the toilet of the mothers is even more

distinguished than that of the young ladies. Is it because these ladies think their daughters have less need to please, or is it because coquetry increases in an inverse ratio to the reason for its existence? I shall not permit myself to judge of the question. As to the men, it is not so. The ball costume, once adopted, is worn by all, and for those who wish to be original there is no resource in deviation, except a new way of parting the hair or wearing the necktie. Even this last part of the toilet is beginning to be arbitrarily decided.

But it was nearly three o'clock and the evening was drawing to a close. It was the moment when the observer could philosophize a little. There were fewer people dancing, the guests were more at their ease, and laughter more general. Toward the close of the ball, abandon replaces pretension, and many ladies do not begin to be graceful until they have forgotten themselves a little.

A few persons who had not yet had a chance to speak together chatted in a corner of the salon. Some young gentlemen had seized the moment for conversation with the pretty girls whom they led out to dance, and ladies smiled more indulgently upon their cavaliers. The hour had come when all might venture upon a greater intimacy.

M. de Montreville walked about with that amiable manner of the master of the house who understands perfectly how to do the honors. He chatted a little with an elderly marquise who was

alone upon a sofa. He hastened to say a gallant word to an old lady who did not dance, and found time, by the way, to make a pretty compliment to the young dancers. He kept the punch and ices going; he had leisure for a moment at the écarté table, and if some one were needed to take a bet he was always ready.

But what was Frederic doing, leaning against the chimneypiece? He appeared to give all his attention to the dance, but was it really the quadrille which absorbed him? And if he thought only of watching the light steps of that pretty girl, why did he seem to repress a hidden suffering? Yes, to the observer, his calm is merely superficial; the smile which comes and goes upon his lips is not at all natural. Frederic is strongly preoccupied, but it is not with the dance.

A few steps from him was seated a young lady who was scarcely twenty years old, though she had been married three years to a notary of sixty, who at that moment was playing écarté in the card salon. Madame Dernange was very pretty. Everything about her was fascinating, — her dress, her vivacity, the sparkle of her eye and the brilliancy of her wit. She pleased, she subdued and enchained with the flash of her eye. But, as she knew full well the power of her charms, she sought constantly to increase the number of her adorers. Married at sixteen, she accepted M. Dernange without the slightest preference, but she accepted

him with joy. She longed to be her own mistress, and to devote herself to her taste for coquetry.

With a husband nearly sixty years old, she was pretty certain to do exactly as she pleased; and in fact M. Dernange allowed her entire liberty. She was seen at all the fêtes, at all the balls and at all the receptions. Sometimes her husband accompanied her, but more often he went to bed at the hour of his wife's departure. This did not prevent their having a pleasant home; for it was very easy to be happy with his wife, provided he let her have her own way in everything. M. Dernange was a husband who enjoyed life, and he was enchanted to see his wife amuse herself. Many people were certain that the young wife did not abuse his confidence, and that is possible. She was very coquettish, and coquettes love no one. But it is well not to trust too much to that.

Frederic had not met the brilliant Madame Dernange with indifference. In a moment she had known how to inflame him, and in another moment had perceived her victory. The young Count of Montreville was not a conquest to be disdained. Madame Dernange resolved to fix him to her chariot; and for that she needed only to bestow upon him a few glances, a few smiles, a light pressure of the hand, and those half-whispered words which are so significant when the voice seems to tremble. The coquette employed all these arts with such grace! She did not love,

and therefore knew better how to make herself beloved. The person who really loves has much more difficulty in pleasing than the one who does not love at all; for the selfish coquette knows how to use every advantage, while love, with its natural desire to be attractive, often produces self-conscious awkwardness. Ninon said that, and Ninon knew what she was talking about.

Poor Frederic was very easily the dupe of this clever manœuvring. He believed himself loved, adored, and for some days he lost his head over it; but at his father's reception a young and brilliant colonel had been presented. Here was a man who was quoted for his success with the ladies, for his gallant adventures. He was a man, indeed, whom it would be glorious to number among her adorers, and Madame Dernange promised herself to make a new conquest.

Poor Frederic! This evening you were quite forgotten. She no longer thought of you, but of the handsome colonel. Occasionally a tender word or smile was bestowed upon you, but you were in love and so you were jealous. You perceived easily that the glances of the coquette were fastened upon him whom she wished to ensnare.

The young man approached the brilliant Dernange several times. He wished her to see that he penetrated her perfidy; but the young woman only said to him, smiling, "What is the matter

with you this evening, Monsieur de Montreville? Your serious air is quite amusing."

How consoling such words are to a jealous lover! Frederic made no response, but walked away with his heart full of bitterness, while the coquette went into fits of laughter over some clever jest made by the colonel or another of her adorers. All the evening Frederic had been upon thorns, and toward the close of the ball, observing that Madame Dernange was seated upon a sofa with the colonel beside her, he placed himself near enough to observe them.

He leaned against the chimneypiece, and turned, pretending to be interested in the dancing; but he did not lose a word of what was said upon the sofa. The colonel, amiable and gallant, was evidently paying court to Madame Dernange. The lady called up all her art and coquetted with her usual grace. She laughed so well, she was so pretty, so enchanting, when she wished to please! There was a constant exchange of compliments and spirited repartees, during which poor Frederic was all on fire. If he did not control himself, he should insult the colonel and overwhelm that perfidious woman with reproaches! Happily, he preserved enough common sense to feel the impropriety of such a scene, and the ridicule which it would pour upon him. In all love affairs, the one who complains and is deceived is sure to be laughed at on every side. The old proverb says,

"The vanquished pay the penalty." It would be easy to make a slight variation on this proverb, which would render it more just, except in England, where the husbands get paid when they are what I consider vanquished.

The colonel paid his court in military fashion; that is, he covered a great deal of ground in a short time. Unfortunately this manner is often extremely successful. Unfortunately, I say, for the timid lovers, because is not that best which makes us most quickly happy? Frederic heard the colonel ask Madame Dernange for permission to call and pay her his respects, — the respects of a colonel of hussars! Frederic broke into a cold perspiration. The pretty creature objected a little; she laughed, she jested; she said that she would have to ask her husband; and then, with fresh laughter, she added, —

"But no, no! It is impossible!"

The colonel was very pressing. M. Dernange would permit him. At last the permission was granted him. Frederic was suffocating. He walked away quickly, for he could endure no more. He passed into an adjoining room where there was no one, for a great number of the guests had now gone.

Frederic threw himself into an arm-chair. The apartment was only feebly lighted by the expiring lamps in their globes of crystal, and now he could give way without restraint to his sorrow. He drew forth his handkerchief, he choked, and the

tears moistened his eyelids. It is usually with tears that we pay our apprenticeship to the world. A few years later and he will laugh at what desolated his heart for the moment. After having been deceived, he will become the deceiver in his turn; but he will never again be so foolish as to attach himself to a coquette. Perhaps he in his turn will break loving hearts, for often the innocent pay the debts of the guilty; and yet it is possible that Frederic may always keep the sensitiveness, the constancy, which make him regret so deeply a heart he has never possessed.

Such words as "flirt," "deceitful," "perfidious," fell from his lips and were followed by long sighs. For more than half an hour he sat lost in bitter thoughts. The candles were extinguished, the noise of the dancing had ceased. Several persons passed before him, without his paying the least attention to them, and he himself was not perceived as he sat in his corner. Some ladies came in search of their wraps, which they had thrown over an ottoman not far from Frederic. But a well-known voice presently pierced his heart. It was that of Madame Dernange. She spoke with one of her friends. These ladies seemed very gay.

"I have had such a pleasant time!" said the wife of the old notary. "This colonel is really very attractive."

"But, my dear friend, did you see how displeased Frederic was?"

"Yes, indeed; I could scarcely keep from laughing at him."

"You have broken his heart."

"Oh, such a misfortune! That young man is really romantic and sentimental enough to give one hysterics. He is a perfect fool!"

"Oh, my dear, don't be unjust! Wait till he has lost his sophomoric air and learned a little of the gallant tone of society, and you will see how distinguished he will be."

"Oh, well, when I am ready to amuse myself again, it will depend entirely on myself. I have only to say a word, to throw him a glance, to make him fall at my feet. But do give me my shawl; you have been holding it for an hour. The colonel is waiting to hand me to my carriage."

The ladies went out. Frederic arose also. He could scarcely credit what he had heard. Disgust, jealousy, anger, tore his heart, where love could no longer keep its place. His vanity had been wounded, and wounded vanity quickly triumphs over love.

It was with such feeling that Frederic returned to his apartment, and in entering he closed the door with such violence that Dubourg sprang up, wide awake.

CHAPTER III

Plans of Travel. M. Ménard. En Route

"A point on the quart," exclaimed Dubourg, springing up from his couch, while Frederic, who was greatly surprised at finding him there, looked at him for a moment in silence, and then delivered himself without reserve to the pleasure of unburdening his heart, and relating all his troubles to his friend.

"O my dear Dubourg," he exclaimed, "it must be that Heaven has sent you here!"

"Quite otherwise; it is my hard-hearted landlord, who has turned me out of his house into the street."

"I can then, at least, find a heart which will respond to mine, which will understand my sorrow and sympathize with my troubles," said Frederic.

"Have you also been betting on the losing side?"

"She is a flirt! A traitress! A deceiver!"

"My dear boy, fortune is feminine; when one has said that, one has said all."

"Oh, yes, a woman can be very cruel! If you knew what she had dared to say to me!"

"What, has fortune spoken to you?"

"I am only a fool. Yes, in a way she is right. I was a fool to love her; but it is ended. Yes, forever! She believes that a word, a smile, will bring me back to her feet, will enchain me still. Oh, no; I will no longer be her dupe; I know her for what she is now."

Dubourg rubbed his eyes and looked at Frederic, who with a desperate air strode about the chamber. He stood still for a moment, and smote his forehead, smiling bitterly.

"Whom the devil are you talking about?"

"Whom? Of Madame Dernange, of course, — of that woman whose heart is as false as her face is pretty, — of that coquette whom I have adored for the past two months, and who I thought loved me. Well, my dear Dubourg, she has all along been laughing at me."

"And that surprises you? O my poor Frederic, you are young indeed!"

"She has fooled me into believing that she responded to my love, and this evening a newcomer arrived, — a colonel, — and he took her heart from me without any trouble. I wanted to call him out, — to kill this colonel!"

"Would that have made Madame Dernange less of a flirt?"

"No, indeed; that is what I said to myself?"

"In paying court to her he has done what any one else would do in his place. You cannot blame

him; on the contrary, you ought to be very grateful to him, for he has taught you to know a woman who could jest at your expense."

"I believe you are right," said Frederic, seating himself sorrowfully in an arm-chair; while Dubourg, who was quite waked up, thought it the proper time to preach a little sermon to his friend.

"Listen, Frederic. I am older than you, and I have seen a great deal of the world. I have had experience, if I have been guilty of some follies. I want to warn you that you have an unfortunate tendency toward sentiment and romantic passion which will be sure to do you an ill turn. You have an intense desire to be loved, adored; and what the devil is the use? Do you want to pass your life in sighing? Do you think a young man ought to make love in that way? In reality, you are not more constant yourself than anyone else; for, though I have known you scarcely a year, in that time you have had your seventh passion. The reason you have suffered so much in all this is because in your seven passions all have left you first, and you ought on the contrary to have set them the example.

"But remember, you are always consoled; and you will get over this one as easily as you have the others, I promise you; only try and learn not to feel so deeply for what is after all nothing but youthful folly. We must have some sentiment to

please the ladies, but not too much; for actually, if you grow sentimental, you kill sentiment.

"All that I am saying to you is very reasonable, and I am sure your father, the Count, would approve it highly if he were here. He would be delighted to see that you have a friend who has given you only good advice, and who will give you much more. Oh, if I only had not lost that five hundred francs that my poor aunt sent me!"

Frederic had not paid much attention to Dubourg's moralizing. He had become more calm as it went on, because the most violent crises are always the shortest, and the young man believed himself much more deeply in love than he really was.

"How does it happen that you are here in the middle of the night?" he said, at last, to Dubourg.

"My friend, how can I tell you? A succession of unfortunate circumstances. First, my landlord, who is a perfect vulture; then an evening with little Delphine. You know I took you there once, but as you are always looking for sentiment, you did not go back; and really, she might have given you for money something as good as you have received from Madame Dernange. Well, my dear, I played, and I lost all I had. I don't know really what will become of me. I thought of you. I know your friendship, and I expected to see you tomorrow; but when I saw the house all open and lighted up, I thought I might just as well

come in and wait for you here; and while someone whispered to your sweetheart, I have been solving a problem."

"My poor Dubourg!"

"Oh, yes, truly very poor!"

"Listen. I have an idea."

"Let us hear the idea."

"This life in Paris is tiresome to me."

"It will be more tiresome to me, now that I haven't a penny."

"The sight of these coquettish women makes me ill."

"Oh, that is the reason."

"I would like to fly from the false creatures."

"Well, I don't see very well where you could go."

"I hate these receptions and entertainments, where you chat without saying anything, where you have no real affinity for anyone, and where you go for mere distraction rather than for pleasure. All this displeases me. I have only been out in the world two years and a half and I am heartily tired of it. Now, here is my plan."

"Do you wish to become a hermit?"

"No; but I am going to leave Paris for a while. I want to travel,—to see other countries. It is in this way that we strengthen spirit and judgment. It is in comparing the manners and habits of the different people of the world, in learning to understand the wonders and beauties of nature, that

knowledge is deepened; and the heart experiences joys which can never be felt at formal gatherings, where etiquette and idleness reign."

"Well thought out!" said Dubourg, rising from his couch. "It is a good thing to travel, my friend; there is nothing more useful for youth. But when you travel alone you are wearied. You only half enjoy yourself when there is no one to whom you can communicate the sentiment roused by an enchanting view, an ancient monument, or an imposing ruin. Besides, you are too young to run about the world alone. You should have a companion of culture, especially a broad-minded one who has had experience. Well, dear friend, I offer myself as your mentor."

"I was about to propose it, dear Dubourg."

"Indeed! It is with great pleasure—"

"Have you nothing to detain you in Paris?"

"Nothing; not as much as a cot bed."

"Perhaps there is some attachment of the heart."

"Oh, as to attachments, I am not like you. I will make them all along the route; or, it would be better to say, I will make more of them. But that is ended. I shall be wise. I shall settle down. You will be edified at my conduct."

"All right, dear Dubourg; that is decided; we will travel together."

"But there is one little difficulty. How about your father? Will he want you to travel?"

"Oh, I do not think he will oppose it. I have already said something to him about it and he seemed to approve."

"Then everything will go the best in the world; but will you tell him that you intend to take me with you?"

"I will say to him that one of my friends, who is travelling also, will accompany me part of the time."

"All right; arrange everything as you think best, and if necessary, present me to your father. He knows me very slightly, and you will see what a noble and imposing air I can put on. Be careful, though, not to speak of my aunt's money, or of little Delphine, and say nothing about the pretended marriage and the triplets."

"Don't worry."

"As to my family, if it is not noble, it is as good as that of the Count of Montreville, and it is very well thought of in Brittany."

"But, good Heavens, I know all that!"

"I am not saying it for you, but for your father. Well, now, it is settled. See! It is already daylight. I have slept enough, but you need rest. Go to bed, during the day speak to your father, and let me know his reply. I will wait for you at six o'clock at the Rotunda Café."

"It is agreed."

"Oh, I forgot. Lend me a dozen louis. I owe you thirty now, but we will count on the first remittance from my aunt."

"Very good; but between friends should one count?"

"Dear Frederic! There are not many friends like you."

Dubourg put in his pocket the ten louis which Frederic gave him. Then he left his friend to sleep, and issued from the hotel, whistling a new air. He went for a walk on the boulevards, as happy as if he had just been given a situation at twelve thousand francs a year, where he would have nothing to do.

In the course of the day Frederic called upon his father. He trembled a little when he broached his plans to the Count, and the elder gentleman, far from encouraging the confidence of his son, waited in silence until he explained what he desired of him. Frederic greeted his father with respect, and began to lay before him the matter so near his heart. He was embarrassed somewhat in this, because the eyes of the Count were fixed constantly upon his face, and seemed to read his most secret thoughts. He made the necessary explanations, however, and waited anxiously for his father's reply.

The Count appeared to reflect, and kept silent for some moments, while Frederic dared not disturb him. At length he spoke.

"You wish to leave Paris, Frederic?"

"Yes, monsieur."

"You are already tired of pleasure, of balls, of receptions? It is rather soon."

Frederic allowed a sigh to escape him and was silent. The Count smiled a little ironically and added,—

"You do not tell everything. Confess that it is some love disappointment."

Frederic dropped his eyes and blushed. The Count went on in a gentler tone:—

"Oh, well, that is to be expected at your age. Travel; I consent to it. You cannot fail to gain instruction from it, and if I should need your presence I hope that nothing would delay your return."

"O father! A single word and I shall be with you."

"Very well; I count upon that."

"One of my friends, a young man named Dubourg, of an old family in Brittany, thinks of travelling for a while. If you are willing I shall join him."

"No, monsieur; I do not wish it. I had intended speaking of this Monsieur Dubourg, whom you call your friend, and, though I have only seen him with you two or three times, I know him well enough to prefer that he should not be the travelling companion of my son. His family is honorable, I know; but they say M. Dubourg is a worthless fellow."

"Father, I assure you —"

"Do not interrupt me, monsieur. At Paris I cannot prevent your spending your time with such heedless fellows; but when you wish to travel for

instruction and the ripening of your reason, I repeat, your travelling companion should not be a Monsieur Dubourg. I think, too, that you should not take Germain with you. He is not what he was; and besides, it is better to do without a valet in travelling. With your money you can have ample attention wherever you are."

"I'll go alone then, father?"

"No: you are not yet twenty-one. You are too young to be left entirely to yourself. Wait — yes — there is the very man. M. Ménard will accompany you."

"What, monsieur! My tutor?"

"He has not been your tutor for a long time, and he will not accompany you in that capacity. It will be as a friend, a wise counsellor. M. Ménard is well educated and has a character both sweet and patient. You know him well enough, I think, not to be annoyed at having him for a travelling companion. M. Ménard is not a pedant who would reprove your pleasure. He is a man who will love you, and will, I think, know how to prevent the son of the Count of Montreville from forgetting himself."

"But, father —"

"That is enough. I will write to M. Ménard. If he accepts, as I think he will, by the day after tomorrow you can begin your journey."

Frederic withdrew. He was not very well pleased with his father's choice, although he knew that M.

Ménard was a good and kindly man. He would have preferred to travel with Dubourg, whose constant gayety was a relief from his own sentimental temperament, and, what appears singular at first, is in reality very common. Little men love tall women, and little women love big men. Talkative people love those who are taciturn; gourmands by preference dine only with those who are not so; the strong ally themselves with the feeble; men of genius select housekeepers for wives; literary women rarely ever have gifted men as husbands. Pretentious people can only live with people of simple taste; deceitful people prefer those who are honest. The most refined women often love the most foolish men, and the most fickle will be loved by the most faithful. Indeed, vice is attracted by innocence, and innocence is most easily deceived by worthless fellows. Extremes always meet, contrasts approach, and it is in the comparison of light and shade that a painter produces his most beautiful effects.

"Well," said Dubourg, observing Frederic, who came to meet him at the rendezvous, "what news?"

"Well, not very good."

"Your father does not wish you to travel?"

"On the contrary, he consents to that."

"It seems to me, then, that everything is all right."

"Well, but — he doesn't wish —"

"Why don't you finish?"

"He doesn't wish me to travel with you."

"Because?"

"Because — he says —"

"He says — speak out."

"He says that you are a — good-for-nothing."

"But he has hardly seen me three times!"

"It seems someone has been talking to him."

"There are always people who will calumniate innocence! Do you know that if the Count were not your father — But never mind; he may be partly right, and besides, if he knew how I have reformed, and how moral I have become since yesterday evening. But what more?"

"Well, he wishes me to take for travelling companion my old tutor, M. Ménard."

"Give a young man of twenty-one a tutor! Such things make me ill! Never mind; let Monsieur le Comte alone; we will also do as we please."

"How?"

"You will not be angry if I accompany you, will you?"

"Certainly not."

"And I shall not be sorry to leave Paris for a time; that will give my creditors a little rest, for they are constantly running after me."

"But my father?"

"Never mind; say nothing. I will arrange things quite properly. What sort of man is this tutor?"

"Oh, the best man in the world; but he's not a genius."

"So much the better."

"He thinks a great deal of learning."

"I will speak Latin, Greek, English, Chinese even, if he doesn't understand it."

"I believe he has never travelled, except upon maps."

"I will tell him I have made the tour of the world."

"He is always flattered with people of a certain position."

"I will give myself one which is not slight."

"What is your plan, then?"

"I repeat, I will arrange all that. Go and join your father; make arrangements with your tutor — Ah! see that they give you as much money as possible, for you cannot have too much in travelling. Be sure, also, to tell me the hour of your departure, and the route you will take."

The two young men then separated. Dubourg told Frederic where he could let him know the time for starting, and he revealed nothing further of his own plans.

Let us leave Frederic and Dubourg and seek out M. Ménard, of whom the young count had given such a slight sketch, but whom we must know better before we travel with him. M. Ménard was a man of fifty years, short, broad and full-faced. He had a double chin in good accord with his nose, which was stuck between his cheeks like a fat chestnut. He had red ears like M. Tartuffe and his

florid complexion. His stomach began to trouble him a little, but his abbreviated legs, ornamented with two enormous calves, seemed strong enough to support a still more ponderous machine.

M. Ménard had passed almost all his life in instructing young people. He had cultivated that sweet and benignant manner which a tutor among fashionable people always adopts with his pupils. M. Ménard was not very learned, but he gloried in what he knew, and he was not insensible to praise. His limited talent had become still more contracted because he had exercised it only among children; but M. Ménard was honest, humane and obliging. His one weakness was that he felt himself an inch taller in the presence of a great gentleman; his single fault was a pronounced penchant for the pleasures of the table, and this caused him now and then a slight indisposition. He never drank beyond moderation, but he sometimes returned too often to truffled turkey and salmi of partridge.

The Count of Montreville sent for M. Ménard, who hastened to fulfil his wishes, and who accepted with joy the proposition which was made to him to travel in a comfortable post-chaise with the son of the Count of Montreville, with that one of his pupils who had brought him the most honor. It was a great piece of good fortune for the ex-preceptor, who just then happened to be out of employment.

The Count advised him to watch over Frederic, but not to oppose his fancies in things which concerned the follies of his age. The Count was pleased with the submission his son had shown in accepting his tutor for a companion, and wished to reward him by granting him freedom to go where he pleased.

All was at last arranged between the Count and the two travellers, and the Count sent to M. Ménard quite a large sum of money, which was to be at Frederic's command.

"My son," said the Count, "travel like a man of your rank, but do not waste this money foolishly. By careful management and constant care, I have been able to provide you with a comfortable fortune in anticipation of the time when you will marry. You should not draw upon your principal, but if you need more money let me know through M. Ménard."

Frederic promised his father to be careful, but he had just written to Dubourg that they would set forth the next morning and would take the route to Lyons.

The preparations of a young man are soon finished. Those of M. Ménard consumed a little more time. As a prudent man, he did not get into the carriage without having put a Lesage pie in his trunk and a little bottle of Madeira in his pocket.

At last everything was ready. Frederic was delighted to set forth, to leave Paris, and especially

Madame Dernange. The poor boy really believed that she would regret him, and that his departure would, perhaps, break her heart. When he has travelled awhile he will lose such fancies.

But the carriage was waiting, the postilion was in the saddle. Frederic pressed his father's hand to his heart. M. Ménard saluted the Count six times and then got into the carriage backwards in order to have the honor of saluting him once more. Frederic threw himself back upon the cushions, the postilion cracked the whip, and they were en route for Italy.

CHAPTER IV

A New Way of Making Acquaintances. The Baron Potoski

For some little time the carriage had rolled along; the conversation, however, had languished between the two travellers; first of all, M. Ménard had expressed to Frederic the extreme satisfaction he experienced at being again in his company, and the latter had thanked the tutor for his kind expressions; then they had admired several points in the landscape, and commented upon them; after which the young man's memory reverted to Madame Dernange and several other unfaithful fair ones, and he had, in consequence, become dreamy and relapsed into silence. Presently M. Ménard addressed himself to a pie with which he had taken care to provide himself, and held a lively intercourse with it, which he only interrupted to say a few friendly words to the little bottle of Madeira.

"I believe we are having a most delightful journey," remarked Frederic, rousing himself from his reflections.

M. Ménard hastened to swallow the morsel of pie he was masticating, and replied, smiling,—

"I believe it also, Count, we have everything we need here. Would you not like to taste this pie, my dear Count, it is perfect."

"Thank you, my dear Ménard, I am not yet hungry. But pray, do not let us have so much ceremony between us, do not call me Count, but, as of old, call me Frederic, that will be much better."

"Very well, Count, but in travelling, at the hotels, for instance," pleaded M. Ménard, "it is just as well that they should be aware that they have the honor of serving — "

"Yes, no doubt, and in that way we shall pay four times as much as is necessary for everything," said the young man, "I repeat that I desire to avoid all ceremony ; it adds nothing to the pleasure of the journey."

"You will, at least," said the old tutor, "permit me to call you M. de Montreville, for the Count, your father, might object if he thought his son was travelling incognito."

"By the way, how much money did he give you?"

"Eight thousand francs, monsieur," rejoined M. Ménard.

"Eight thousand francs! That is not too much."

"Ah, Monsieur de Montreville, it is surely enough for two men, especially when they have horses and carriages of their own. We shall not go to the end of the world. Besides, you know

that the Count, your father, told us that in case of urgent need we could ask him for more."

"Yes, and, besides, we are not going to spend money foolishly."

"And then in travelling it would be imprudent to carry too large a sum. We are going to Italy, and that country is infested with brigands. Between Rome and Naples especially, they say the road is extremely dangerous. When we arrive there it will be necessary to take every precaution."

Frederic made no answer; he was thinking at the moment of Dubourg, and was surprised that he had received no news of him. The travellers had already attained a distance of nine leagues from Paris, on a very good road, where it would have been difficult to have foreseen an accident.

Suddenly the loud snapping of a postilion's whip announced that they were followed by other travellers. Frederic looked back and perceived behind them a small carriage which was coming along very swiftly. Soon the increasing noise indicated that the carriage was overtaking them and would soon pass them. A cloud of dust enveloped the travellers, but the road was so wide that there was no need of their turning on one side. However, just as they expected the carriage would pass, it struck their vehicle so forcibly that the post-chaise was overturned near a ditch, and M. Ménard, who had been thrown out of the chaise by the shock, rolled into it, shouting loudly.

The coach stopped. The postilion of the chaise began to swear at the coach's postilion, calling him imbecile, fool, drunkard, because he had run into him on a road broad enough for three carriages to pass with ease. The other driver made no response, but contented himself with laughing, which angered the postilion still more.

Frederic was unharmed, and hurried to M. Ménard to discover the state of his injuries. The tutor was evidently more frightened than hurt. He felt of himself all over, readjusted his perruque, and declared that the fall would certainly upset his digestion.

Meanwhile the driver of the coach had dismounted. He talked for a moment with the person in his charge, and then advanced, hat in hand, towards the travellers, who were still in the ditch, and begged pardon for his awkwardness. He said that the Baron Ladislas Potoski, palatine of Rava and Sandomir, asked permission to come and inquire after their state, and offer any assistance in his power.

When he heard the postilion recite the name and title of the traveller he conducted, M. Ménard hastened to rise from the ditch, to straighten his waistcoat and pull out his shirt frills, which his fall had somewhat disarranged.

"Tell your master that we appreciate his kindness," replied Frederic; "but it is unnecessary to disturb him. I hope that there is no serious harm done."

"But our carriage is a little damaged," said M. Ménard; "and we might accept the offer of M. le Palatine Pota—Poto—Potiouski, until we reach the next village."

The tutor had not finished speaking when the so-called Polish nobleman sprang from his carriage and advanced toward them. He had his hand on his hip and swaggered in great style. Frederic raised his eyes and recognized Dubourg. He almost burst with laughter, but Dubourg made him a warning sign and ran toward him, exclaiming,—

"I am not mistaken! Happy accident! This is M. Frederic de Montreville!"

Dubourg threw himself into Frederic's arms, and Frederic, pretending great surprise also, cried out,—

"Really, really, it is Monsieur de—Monsieur du—"

"The Baron Potoski," whispered Dubourg, under his breath.

"It is his excellency, the Baron Potoski!"

While the recognition was taking place they were standing on the edge of the ditch, and M. Ménard kept bowing, and pulling at Frederic's coat, to remind him that they should go back to the road, which seemed to him a much more decent place for an introduction to the great Polish seigneur.

Dubourg turned presently toward Ménard, and addressed himself to Frederic.

"Have I the honor to meet the Count,

your father?" he asked, smiling upon the preceptor with a graciousness and nobility beyond description.

"No," replied Frederic, "but he has been a second father to me. Allow me to present M. Ménard, my former tutor."

"M. Ménard!" exclaimed Dubourg, turning to him a face full of admiration, and gazing at him as people once gazed at Voltaire. "Is it really M. Ménard? Bless me! I have often heard you spoken of — always as the primus interpares of tutors! How charmed I am to make your acquaintance! Tandem felix, Monsieur Ménard, since I see you."

M. Ménard no longer knew what he was doing. This deluge of praise and courtesy on the part of the palatine of Rava and Sandomir transported and overcame him to such a degree that he was dizzy from bowing, and would have rolled into the ditch again if Frederic had not stopped him in time.

Dubourg put an end to the poor man's embarrassment by taking his hand, which he pressed with unmistakable force.

"How much honor you do me, monsieur!" stammered the tutor at last; then, turning to Frederic, he said, "Then you have met the Seigneur Potoski before?"

"Yes, indeed!" exclaimed Frederic, smiling; "we are intimate friends, this dear Dubourg!"

"What! Dubourg?" said Ménard in surprise.

"Oh, yes!" cried the pretended baron eagerly. "That is the name by which I was known in Paris, where I was obliged to preserve a severe incognito, as I was charged by my government with very secret and delicate missions."

"I understand! I understand!" said Ménard.

"My dear Frederic," added the Baron, "call me Dubourg still; it was under that name that I first knew you, and it will be ever dear to me."

M. Ménard went to examine the overturned carriage, and Frederic took the opportunity to say to Dubourg, "Are you aware that the means you took to rejoin me were a little violent? You came near killing me and this poor Ménard."

"That was the fault of the imbecile postilion. I told him to tip me out as soon as we were near you, but the rascal preferred to overturn you. That annoys me so much the more because I expected to go on in your carriage, and instead of that I must offer you mine, which is not at all the same thing. Never mind; let me arrange it. I see that it is very easy to impose upon this poor Ménard; but be ready to second me, and support what I say whenever it is necessary, and above all things do not forget that I am the Baron Potoski, palatine of Rava and Sandomir. You very nearly spoiled it all by calling me Dubourg. Happily, I have set that right; but if you are guilty of such awkwardness again I may be obliged to travel alone, and I assure you that I would not go very far."

Ménard returned to say that there was a broken axletree in the post-chaise, and that they would not be able to go on until the following morning.

"Well, gentlemen," said Dubourg, "you must do me the favor to accept my coach. We can stop for the night in the nearest village, and meanwhile the wheelwright of the neighborhood will repair your carriage."

This arrangement being adopted, the postilion was directed to lead the chaise along at a slow pace, and all three travellers mounted into the Polish baron's coach. It was an old and shabby carriage, of which the interior was soiled and patched in different places, testifying to its long use; and the bad condition of the springs kept the travellers jumping about like rubber balls.

Frederic could not repress a smile on entering the palatine's chariot, but Dubourg lost no time in creating the right impression. He addressed M. Ménard, who modestly seated himself in front, but could not avoid some furtive glances about him.

"You see," he said, "a carriage which is much older than we. It belonged to my ancestor. Stanislas Leczinski fled in this very carriage pursued by his competitor Augustus, who was protected by the Czar, while Charles the Twelfth supported Stanislas. But you know all that better than I, Monsieur Ménard, for you are a learned man."

"Ah, Baron!"

"To return to this carriage: All my relatives revere it as I do. It is truly a family carriage. When my father left Cracovia in a time of trouble, this modest coach contained six millions, partly in gold and partly in jewels. It was the remnant of his fortune, with which he wished to retire to Brittany, where you eat such excellent butter and delicious products of the dairy."

At the mention of six millions Frederic had been obliged to bite his lips, and here he began to cough violently to conceal his desire to laugh. But M. Ménard examined the old carriage with an air of great respect.

"You can understand, Monsieur Ménard," continued Dubourg, wiping his face with a silk handkerchief, which he had stuck in the pocket of his waistcoat, to give himself a foreign air — "you can understand how one clings to a carriage which recalls such honorable memories. I know that it is not modern, and that it could be better hung. Twenty times my steward has wished to have it repainted, and to put a new lining in it; but I have always refused. This place where I sit was occupied by King Stanislas, yours by a Hungarian princess, and I declare to you, Monsieur Ménard, that I cannot change this Utrecht velvet, when it has had the honor of supporting such illustrious personages."

"I share your sentiments entirely in this regard, your excellency," said Ménard. He was enrapt-

ured at the idea of travelling with two gentlemen of such distinguished rank, and the joy of knowing that he sat in a spot once occupied by a princess of Hungary was almost more than he could bear.

"This carriage must be very dear to you," he murmured; "and I assure your excellency that it is perfectly comfortable, and that I find it very easy —"

At this moment a sudden jolt threw M. Ménard upon his pupil's knees; but he continued, clinging to the curtain, "Ubi plura nitent in carmine, non ego paucis offendar maculis," and Dubourg answered him with "Vitam impendere vero."

Frederic coughed a little harder as he looked through the window, and M. Ménard bowed low while he said, "Your excellency, I have never doubted it."

"Forced to travel incognito," continued Dubourg, "I have not brought any members of my suite, and I assure you I do not find it so bad; for I detest the formality, the etiquette, all the state which accompanies a high position. In travelling I have dispensed with all that. I am a man of nature, and I live as a simple observer. But, by the way, my dear Frederic, I have not yet asked you where you are going. Is it an indiscreet question?"

"Well, really, my dear friend, I am leaving Paris because I have found there only coquettish or hard-hearted women, who do not understand my manner of loving."

"Yes, my dear; and that is because your notion of loving is not the fashionable one. I see you have had a little disappointment. You were always a trifle romantic, just a little bit sentimental. We must cure Frederic of this folly, must we not, M. Ménard?"

"Baron, that is not in my power; and besides, we must not be too hard on him. You know what Seneca has said,—'Non est magnum ingenium sine mixtura dementiæ.'"

"It is very true," replied Dubourg; "the greatest men have their weaknesses. Alexander drank too much; Antony dressed himself as Bacchus to please Cleopatra; Æneas consulted the Cumæan sibyl; the Emperor Maximilian died from eating too much melon. Then it is not surprising that Frederic has too impressible a heart."

M. Ménard bowed low before the Baron, who had just given him this fragment of his learning, which increased immensely the respect he already felt for him.

"I have not yet decided where to go," remarked Frederic. "I wish to see those countries which recall interesting facts or have given birth to celebrated men. We love to touch the earth where a genius was born which has survived so many generations. In all that surrounds us then, we seem to recreate the great man who has made his native place illustrious by his writing, his military achievements or his virtue. So, dear friend, we think of beginning our journey in Italy."

"What! is it possible? Like you, I have planned to run about the world and add something to my little store of knowledge. How charming it would be if we could go together!"

"Gladly, dear Baron. That will give me great pleasure, I assure you."

"Ah, thanks! I am grateful for the chance which brought us together. What a pleasure it will be to travel with my intimate friend, the Count de Montreville, and the learned M. Ménard; to mingle our reflections upon the places which we visit; and to receive the enlightenment which must come from the remarks, friendship and knowledge of so distinguished a professor!"

Ménard bowed confusedly and began to express his thanks; but Dubourg went on warmly, without leaving him time to reply: "What a joy it will be to see ancient Rome with you, and that superb Genoa; to climb with M. Ménard the summit of Vesuvius, and descend into the crater, if there is no danger! What a pleasure it will be to visit with a friend the tomb of Virgil and the Grotto of the Dog, and to stand with a learned man on the Tarpeian rock! What delights await us in Switzerland, the country of William Tell, cradle of liberty, where the customs of the people have retained their simplicity in spite of the storms of revolution! There we shall meet everywhere the most touching hospitality, and eat cheese, M. Ménard —ah, such cheese! I will not guarantee, however,

that it equals that of Brittany; for there is nothing better than what they eat in Brittany. Ah, that is a beautiful country, with its woods and fields, its fine pastures. They have very fine cows there, M. Ménard."

Frederic nudged Dubourg as a warning to drop Brittany, for his natural sentiment always led him back to this subject. He hastened to repair his fault. "In Switzerland it is not rare to eat a cheese fifteen or twenty years old. These good people have the art of keeping it an indefinite length of time."

"That should be even better than our Roquefort," responded M. Ménard, who felt himself upon his own ground when they spoke of eating.

"Oh, I guarantee it; by the side of these old Swiss affairs, our Roquefort is only Neufchâtel. Indeed, Monsieur Ménard, if you travel with me, I hope you will eat cheese more than once."

"Ah, your excellency!"

"We will visit the glaciers; we will ascend Saint Gothard and the Righi, where they say you must crawl on all fours. What superb views we shall gaze upon! We will cross the Grisons country and there we will botanize. M. Ménard will collect specimens. We will watch the young Swiss girls gleaning — they wear very short petticoats. Ah, we shall see some pretty things!"

"Well, my dear master, what do you think of our plans?" said Frederic to his old tutor.

M. Ménard was delighted; to travel with a man so noble, so learned, so amiable as the Baron Potoski seemed to him a great happiness; and although the hard cushions and the jolting of the carriage had already given him some bruises, his courage would have carried him a thousand leagues in a coach which had borne King Stanislas, and in the seat a princess of Hungary had occupied.

"Certainly," he said; "I see no objection to our travelling with Monsieur le Baron, and by the first post I will write to your father, the Count, and tell him of our happy encounter. He could not but approve it."

"No, no!" cried Dubourg; "you must not write a word to the Count. I have told you I travel incognito; I do not wish anyone to know in which direction I turn my steps. My government wishes to appoint me ambassador to the Porte, but I do not care for that dignity. The Count might speak of me inadvertently, and immediately all France would know where I had gone. It would be better to say nothing."

"I am of the same opinion," said Frederic. "Of what use is it to tell all this to my father? He has given me entire liberty to go where it seems good to me, and has asked M. Ménard to accompany me, not as a guardian, but as a friend. Surely, in travelling with the Baron I could only give my father extreme pleasure. But in his joy at having me in such company, he would un-

doubtedly speak of you. Your incognito would be betrayed, and you would be forced to leave us."

"In short," said Ménard, "I comprehend that — in short, if — "

Dubourg saw that the tutor still had some scruples, and he hastened to draw from his pocket his shell tobacco box, which he presented to Frederic, glancing at it significantly.

"Do you recognize it, dear Frederic? It is the one you saw in Paris."

"Oh, yes; I recognize it," replied Frederic, although he had no idea what Dubourg meant; while M. Ménard glanced at the snuff box and waited impatiently for the Baron to explain.

"Ah, that is very precious to me!" exclaimed Dubourg, enjoying a pinch of snuff. "You have no idea, M. Ménard, to whom this box belonged?"

"No, indeed, Baron."

"Simple as it is, I would not exchange it for a box of gold. It was the snuff box of the King of Prussia, M. Ménard."

"Of the King of Prussia?"

"Yes, monsieur, of the great Frederick, who, as you know, was a decided lover of tobacco. He carried it often loose in his pocket; but this did not prevent his having some very simple tobacco boxes, and this is one of them. He gave it to my father and I have it from him."

"Ah, your excellency, if I dared to ask the favor — "

Ménard held out two of his fingers very respectfully, to take some snuff from the box of the King of Prussia, which Dubourg presented to him smiling.

Ménard took a pinch with all the humility imaginable. He filled his nose with the snuff, which he found delicious; and the poor man believed that when he sneezed he had a slight resemblance to the King of Prussia. He lost his head in the vapor of grandeur, which mingled with the odor of tobacco. At the third sneeze he bowed again to the Baron Potoski, and cried out, "Decidedly it will be useless to write to the Count."

CHAPTER V

A Village Inn. What Happened to Our Travellers

Night was coming on apace when our travellers reached a mean little village. Dubourg had ordered his postilion to put them down at the best inn, but as there was only one in the vicinity they were compelled to alight there, and to resolve to content themselves with the very indifferent accommodations it was likely to afford them.

Frederic was very much opposed to the idea of sleeping in this wretched village, but Dubourg insisted that they should pass the night there. He had his own reasons for avoiding a longer journey in his carriage, and wished to dispense with it at this point; and as M. Ménard was beginning to feel exceedingly in need of refreshment, and as the broken remains of his pie had remained in the disabled post-chaise, he warmly seconded Dubourg's proposition.

This inn was one of those humble houses of entertainment which are rarely frequented by persons of means travelling in carriages, but which are chiefly frequented by humble foot passengers.

The coach entered a roomy court, filled with manure and mud. A dozen ducks paddled in a pond and appeared to dispute its possession with the geese that paraded majestically about, while three pigs grunted and rummaged the corners of this rustic domain. A crippled old horse refreshed himself from a trough, on the edges of which some fowls had perched; and these laid their eggs indifferently in the entrance hall of the inn, in the street, or in the court, feeling probably that there was little difference in the three places. To complete the picture, some rabbits ran back and forth under the hedge of a garden, where they had their warren. From time to time they showed their heads, but were frightened back by the baying of a great dog, which considered itself responsible for the conduct of all the other animals.

The coach passed with some difficulty under an old carriage entrance, which had not been closed for some time. On one side the wheel ran into a rut; on the other, it passed over a heap of manure, and this filled M. Ménard with fear lest the noble coach of the palatine of Rava should tip over, and he should fall with it. But it was only a fright. As the carriage entered the court, the pigs and the rabbits scattered, the ducks squawked, the fowls and geese fled, and the dog rushed barking in the faces of the travellers. A dozen country fellows and as many peasant women — almost the entire village, in

fact — gathered about the entrance to see the travellers get out of the carriage.

"Where the devil are they taking us? cried Frederic, putting his head out of the window, but withdrawing it again immediately, for the wheel had stirred up the filth in the place and the odor was not exactly attractive.

"I hope we are not near the kitchen," remarked M. Ménard, holding his nose.

"Don't be alarmed, gentlemen," said Dubourg, "we shall do very well here. You know it is not always well to judge from appearances. I have stopped at this inn before, and I remember that I have eaten excellent rabbit stew and omelets here."

While it might seem strange that a palatine should be pleased with such common dishes, the remark made the court less repulsive to M. Ménard, and alighting from the carriage after Dubourg, who had jumped out on the pile of manure, he looked all about for the kitchen.

The master of the inn now appeared, with his cap over his left ear, but he did not greet the travellers; for being accustomed to receive only wagoners or peasants, who pay little attention to small courtesies, he had acquired a certain familiarity with all strangers, and the sight of a carriage awoke in him no accession of respect, for the reason that his house was not supported by travellers of this kind.

This innkeeper was a little man of fifty years who limped slightly, and whose blooming nose suggested frequent potations of a beverage stronger than water.

"Will you have something to drink, gentlemen?" he said, addressing Ménard, who, with nose in the air, was endeavoring to catch the odor of a rabbit stew. He thought the innkeeper's tone impertinent.

"Come on, my good fellow," said Dubourg; "give us your best room. We want to eat and sleep here. Stir things up as soon as possible; turn the spits and kindle the fires; we are in a great hurry."

"Yes," said Ménard, tapping the innkeeper's shoulder, with a patronizing air, "and pay attention, my friend. You have the honor of receiving the honorable Count Frederic of Montreville and his excellency, Baron Ladislas Potoski, palatine of Rava and Sandomir, and Monsieur Benoît Ménard, a distinguished master and bachelor of arts."

"I have no room for all those great people," said the innkeeper; while Dubourg approached Ménard, reproved him for having betrayed his incognito, and begged him to be more circumspect in the future.

"Hello! Goton! Goton!" cried the landlord, turning toward the garden. "Come and take care of these travellers, while I look after the horses, and tell my wife to see what she can get for supper."

Mademoiselle Goton appeared. She was a tall, strong girl of twenty years, dark, with black eyes, and a skin browned by the sun. Her features were not regular. Her nose was slightly retroussé and her mouth rather large, but she had beautiful teeth and altogether a piquante and attractive face. If, instead of a short skirt of homespun, a cloth cap and a waist of coarse blue woollen, Goton had worn a dress which did justice to her figure; if her skin had been treated with almond paste and her hair had been carefully dressed, no doubt Mademoiselle Goton would have made many conquests in Paris.

"Will you follow me, gentlemen?" said the servant, smiling. Mademoiselle smiled often, for it was very becoming; and a woman always knows how to look her best, whether in the village or in the city. If a mirror is lacking, a pond or a fountain will do as well.

Dubourg in an instant saw what the servant was worth, and as he followed her he said to himself, "I will try and get plenty of supper, and that will amuse Ménard. I shall have my fun with Mademoiselle Goton. If I could only find a sentimental person for Frederic—well, at least I can talk to him of Madame Dernange, and of all his Paris love affairs. That will give us material enough for one evening."

The best room in the inn was that where usually the carters, farmers and peasants dined. Four

travelling pedlers had arrived an hour before the illustrious strangers, and were seated at a table, drinking, and talking about their business.

The arrival of the three newcomers did not disturb the four men in the least. They looked at the gentlemen and continued to drink.

"I'll set your table here," said Goton, approaching a table covered with oilcloth.

"No, no," said Dubourg; "we cannot sup here. You must serve us in one of your sleeping-rooms."

"But this is the dining-room."

"That may be," said M. Ménard; "but the Count and the Baron. No, indeed; we will not eat here."

These words attracted the attention of the pedlers, who eyed the travellers rather sneeringly. M. Ménard, fearing that he had offended them and dreading a scene, took refuge in the hall, where he waited for the maid; while Dubourg, who was not patient, eyed the four drinkers one after the other. As for Frederic, his mind was filled with a thousand memories, and he paid little attention to what went on around him.

"I suppose you see, Goton," said one of the pedlers, smiling scornfully, "these gentlemen are too fine to eat near us. By the Lord! You had better be careful not to look too close at them or they will be offended."

"Nobody spoke to you!" exclaimed Dubourg. "Don't be insolent or you'll be sorry for it."

"Yes," cried Dubourg, in his turn, drawing two pistols of heavier calibre from his pocket, "and now who will be the next?"

PHOTOGRAVURE FROM ORIGINAL PAINTING BY ALBERT E. FOX PITNEY

Copyright 1912 by The Frederick J. Quinn Company

"Oh, there's a fellow who has plenty of cheek!"

"Please, Baron," said Ménard, putting the end of his nose inside the door; "don't let that go any further. These gentlemen had no intention of—"

"Say, it's a baron," said the second pedler; "and I took him for a Swiss herb doctor, with his silk handkerchief flying."

"Have you seen their carriage?" asked a third. "It's an old carryall that I wouldn't harness my donkey to!"

"The wretches! to speak so of King Stanislas' coach!" said Ménard, but he muttered these words so low that no one dreamed he had spoken.

"I tell you," said Dubourg, "shut up, or you'll find out whom you are dealing with!"

"Really!" cried the countrymen, brandishing their cudgels. "We will show you a thing or two!"

Up to this time Frederic had kept silence. He now drew a pair of pistols from his pocket, and advanced to the table where the four drinkers were seated. "Gentlemen," he said in a calm tone, "whatever title we bear, we are men, and we wish to prove it. We are not accustomed to using sticks, but here is something that makes us all equal. Everybody knows how to fire a pistol. Choose! Which of you will fight with me?"

"Yes," cried Dubourg, in his turn, drawing two pistols of heavier calibre from his pocket, "and now who will be the next?"

At sight of the pistols the pedlers turned pale

and dropped their cudgels. Men who abuse their power to outrage those whom they consider more helpless than themselves usually appear very weak and cowardly before such arguments as these.

Goton shrieked aloud at sight of the firearms. The landlord ran limping in. M. Ménard rushed to the end of the hall, where it was too dark to see, and he collided with the landlady, who was hurrying along to discover the cause of the trouble in the dining-room.

The landlady, whose acquaintance we have not yet made, was a little woman of about fifty, almost as broad as she was tall. For some time she had been growing so stout that she could hardly waddle from the bar to the kitchen, and it looked as if she would not be able to walk at all before long.

The effort which she was obliged to put forth to move her immense body made the landlady's life a very sedentary one. She passed almost all of her time in an arm-chair, which a carpenter of the neighborhood had constructed, of sufficient size to comfortably lodge the enormous surface of her centre of gravity. Such a manner of living, far from diminishing her embonpoint, contributed to its rapid and daily increase. This was especially disquieting, as the innkeeper, with his limp, was even now nearly five minutes in making the tour of his wife.

The landlady had heard the cries of Goton and the exclamations of her husband, and, knowing

that something extraordinary must be going on, she left her large arm-chair and passed along the corridor which led to the dining-room. As this corridor was narrow, the landlady rubbed against the two sides which formed the passage and corked it hermetically. It would, therefore, have been impossible for anyone to traverse it at the same time as the landlady, except by jumping over her head or trying to pass between her legs.

It was against this enormous mass that M. Ménard had thrown himself. The sight of the pistols had restored to his limbs the vigor of twenty years, and he thought of nothing but flight from the field of combat. In spite of the impact with which the tutor struck the landlady, she was not shaken. Firm as a rock and, moreover, sustained by the two sides of the corridor, the fat woman could do nothing but cry in a thin falsetto voice, "What's that? Who goes there?"

Stunned by the blow he had received, Ménard was conscious of nothing except that he must get through; and he returned to the object he had struck, hoping to find a passage on one side or the other. He tried the right, and buried his nose in a neck whose fatness outdid that of the Hottentot Venus. He recoiled, and tried the left, and jammed against an arm big enough to stop a window.

"O, my God! where am I?" cried Ménard, who had no idea what was the obstacle before

him. He dreamed only of escape, and, thrusting his head forward like a ram, tried to force his way through, while the landlady shrieked with increasing terror, "What is it? What does he want? Where does he want to go?"

The cries of the landlady attracted the attention of the travellers, for peace was established in the dining-room as soon as Frederic and Dubourg showed their pistols. The four pedlers became courteous and murmured their excuses, and the young men accepted them, not wishing to be embroiled with such company. Everybody's attention was now turned to the corridor.

"It is my wife's voice!" said the landlord. "Something very exciting must have occurred to make her move from her chair."

The landlord hastened towards the corridor with Goton, who carried a light, Dubourg and Frederic following them. They reached the landlady just in time, their steps having been quickened by her shrieks. The noise of the hurrying footsteps increased the terror of Ménard, who determined to force a passage through the obstacle before him; and as he could penetrate neither to the right nor left, he got upon all fours like a child and endeavored to crawl between the legs of the fat woman. The landlady did not know her assailant, and believed him to be a thief. She, therefore, decided that he should not escape, and knowing no other way of stopping him, sat down

upon him, and there she sat astride of Ménard when the whole company rushed into the hall with lights.

Goton burst into fits of laughter. The landlord stood still in amazement, and Frederic and Dubourg sought in vain to comprehend the meaning of this strange tableau.

"I can't stand any more!" cried Ménard, in a suffocated voice.

"I've got him! He's taken!" exclaimed the landlady in triumph.

The poor man was so effectually taken that he would have been suffocated if they had not pulled him out immediately. The landlord was very jealous of his chaste half, and he regarded her as the most beautiful woman to be found within the circumference of a hundred leagues; so he stooped quickly and hauled M. Ménard from his inglorious position.

"You rogue! Great Heavens! Comrade! What are you doing down there? Thousand eyes!"

"Oh, I assure you, little wolf, it's all right. He just wanted to get through," said the landlady, with honeyed words hastening to calm the suspicions of her husband. Ménard was now restored to the air, and began to recover from his fright, although his wig was still upside down and his face quite convulsed.

"But, ducks and drakes! Friend! What were you after there?" cried the landlord, still mystified.

Ménard looked about him with a bewildered air; he was not yet quite himself. Dubourg satisfied everyone. He suspected why M. Ménard tried to run away. He relieved the landlord's doubts, reassured the landlady about the quarrel which had taken place in the dining-room, and ordered Goton to conduct them to their apartments. She did so after the landlady had uncorked the passageway by returning to her chair.

The best suite which could be given to our travellers consisted of two very dirty chambers, embellished by beams which crossed the ceiling, where cats and spiders were domiciled with the occupants of the apartments. In each room was a very poor bed. Blue-and-white curtains, with a design something like a rustic salad bowl, half surrounded each of the beds, which were fully five feet high.

"The apartment is certainly modest," said Frederic, smiling; "but war is war, and when we travel we must put the best face on everything. Is that not true, my dear Ménard?"

"No doubt," replied the gentleman addressed. "A night is soon passed, and these beds seem tolerably good."

"We'll need a ladder to get into them, though."

"But I see only two, Count."

"Oh, don't bother about me," said Dubourg. "I won't go to bed; I shall write. I have some

despatches to send away. I shall throw myself into an arm-chair to finish the night."

"But I don't see one, Baron."

"Never mind; a chair, a bench,—anything. When you have been used to sleeping in a bivouac, you are not very particular. But the supper is late; I will go and have a look at the kitchen."

Dubourg went out, and Frederic placed himself at the window which looked out on the country. The moon lighted up a part of the village, where the most profound calm reigned. The young man compared the life of Paris to that of the inhabitants of this hamlet. He reflected that at the very moment when the simple villagers gave themselves to repose the city people started for the play, or assembled in various places to display their finery and seek pleasure. But did he need to leave the city for contrasts? In one house, on the first floor there may be dancing; on the second, they weep over the death of a husband or father; on the third, perhaps a young man is telling his love for the first time; on the fourth, a drunken fellow beats his wife; on the fifth, a gambler prepares to go out, filling his pockets with gold; and under the roof, a young girl works all night to get bread for her mother.

While Frederic was lost in his reflections, M. Ménard examined the beds and discovered to his sorrow that the bed which he thought would be

so soft was made of a straw mattress four feet thick and a very thin, poor pad.

"These villagers are crazy, with their great straw mattress!" said Ménard, turning over the covers, which scraped his hand. "I thought I was going to sink into feathers. Bah! But these are miserable sheets! And the Baron said this was a good place! I shall go to bed with my drawers on. I hope the supper will make up for the other shortcomings."

Dubourg had gone to speak to the postilion of his coach. He settled his account with him, and ordered him to be gone before morning. Dubourg had only three louis left of the ten which Frederic had given him, and he naturally did not care to retain a carriage for which he could not pay. When this matter was settled, Dubourg lay in wait for Mademoiselle Goton, to whom he wished to say two words. The servant looked upon Dubourg with a favorable eye, because of his brave encounter with the pedlers. She was delighted with him; for courage is a good trait, and pleases buxom maids as well as fine ladies. Goton was helping her master in the kitchen. She was also serving the four men, who seemed inclined to spend the night in drinking at the inn, and start upon their journey at dawn.

The pedlers laughed and jested with the girl, who had enough to do to defend herself from them, as they were inclined to be too familiar.

But Goton was accustomed to doing battle with rough fellows of this description. She gave one a box on the ear, another a kick; she pinched, she scratched, and the clowns found her doubly attractive.

Goton was thus busy on every side, but she found time to whisper two words of hope to Dubourg. At dawn the pedlers would be gone, her employer asleep, and she would be free. This hint enchanted our traveller. He caught Goton at the foot of the staircase and gave her a sounding kiss. The girl fled; but when Dubourg lifted his eyes he saw Ménard, who, candle in hand, had come to see if there was any chance of supper, and stood petrified when he discovered the palatine of Rava holding in his arms the stout dish-washer.

Dubourg was never disconcerted, so he glanced up at Ménard and said, "The Emperor Heliogabalus never failed to reward the inventor of a new dish, so I embraced the person who comes to announce that supper is served."

Nothing could have pleased Ménard better. He returned with Dubourg to Frederic, and Goton came to set the table in the first chamber.

"Let us sit down and be gay!" cried Dubourg, who felt more at ease now that he knew he was relieved of his carriage. Ménard responded to this invitation with a gracious smile, and Frederic decided to leave the moon a moment and devote himself to worldly questions.

"Let us first taste the wine," said Dubourg. "Is it the best you have, my dear?"

"Yes, monsieur, it is the best; we have no more of that sort."

"It is a little sour," declared Ménard, screwing up his face.

"Well, we have some white wine which is sweeter," said Goton.

"Go and bring us the white, my dear. Go — hurry up! You don't have such gentlemen for supper every day."

"No, indeed," remarked Ménard. "Let us hope the landlord remembered that when he cooked these rabbits."

Dubourg served the rabbits, but the landlord had been troubled by his wife's adventure in the corridor, and had allowed his ragout to burn. Goton was busy with the four pedlers, so she put the onions in too late, and forgot to scrape the bacon.

Dubourg insisted in vain that it had a delicious flavor. Ménard said nothing because he did not dare to contradict the Baron, but at each mouthful his face darkened.

"What a devil of a ragout that is!" cried Frederic, pushing away the plate which Dubourg offered him repeatedly. "I should think those rabbits had lived on cabbage, raw onions and rancid bacon; and besides, it has a burnt taste that is detestable."

"It certainly does not correspond with what the Baron promised," said Ménard.

"What is to be done, gentlemen?" replied Dubourg. "A cook sometimes makes mistakes. Errare humanum est. Isn't that true, Monsieur Ménard?"

"Your excellency, a cook should never errare."

"After all, it is your fault. You upset him. Why couldn't you let his wife alone?"

"I only wanted to pass, Baron."

"You took a queer road."

"Your excellency, my intentions were pure."

"I have never doubted that, but your position was certainly questionable."

Goton put an end to this conversation by entering with an omelette and the white wine.

"Did you gentlemen like the ragout?" she asked.

"It is not fit for the devil!" cried Frederic.

"It is altogether bad," added M. Ménard.

"My dear," said Dubourg, "the rabbits of Brittany do not taste so strong of cabbage; you find excellent ones there; but here you follow a bad method in raising them."

"It seems that your excellency has lived a long time in Brittany," remarked Ménard, extending his fingers to take a pinch from the snuffbox of the King of Prussia, which Dubourg had handed to him.

"Yes, Monsieur Ménard; and I confess that I

have a weakness for that country. I have very sweet memories of it. Ah, what a blue sky they have in Brittany! And its landscapes,—how lovely they are! What pastures and what enchanting woods you find there! You go several miles from the city without leaving the shady trees, the bowers and flowery pathways."

"But what of Poland, Baron?"

"Ah, Poland has its merits also. Have you been there, M. Ménard?"

"I have not had that honor, your excellency."

"Since you do not know it, I will often speak of it to you."

"I should think it would be a strange country."

"Very strange, picturesque and interesting. We have, especially, the Krapach Mountains. In comparison with them Mount Cenis is merely a hill."

"Oh, is it possible! And are these mountains covered with snow?"

"Almost all the year. I have a castle at the top of one of these cliffs, and it is so steep that only a chamois could climb to its top."

"And how do you reach your castle, Baron?"

"I have had a winding staircase constructed in the interior of the mountain. It cost me a hundred thousand francs; but it is a superb thing, and you can see it from a hundred leagues around. I certainly hope, M. Ménard, that I shall have the pleasure of showing you that, and that you

will pass some time with me in my château at Krapach. I shall offer you there a certain wine of Tokay which I obtained from the cave of Tékély, and I shall ask you for some interesting information about it."

"Ah, Baron, you overwhelm me. But is it not cold in your castle?"

"It was indeed very cold in the times of my ancestors; but, thanks to the new discoveries in lighting in this century, I have found the means of moderating the temperature. It is a very simple means, and one that accomplishes its object perfectly."

"Do tell us what it is, Baron."

"I have placed a gasometer under my château. Gas, as you know, gives much warmth to the earth. Wherever the pipes run under the ground, the heat is so great that I can grow green peas in January, out of doors. — But drink, dear Count; you are going to choke!"

Frederic indeed had much difficulty in attending quietly to the conversation which Dubourg carried on with perfect seriousness. M. Ménard listened to it all with the utmost interest and confidence, never doubting a single word of the Baron's utterances.

Just then the conversation was interrupted by a violent shock, from which the house trembled; and this shock was followed by an ominous cracking.

"Good Lord!" cried Ménard, "what is that? This house does not appear at all solid."

"Are they firing a cannon in the village to announce our arrival?" said Dubourg to Goton.

She laughed. "No, no; it is nothing," she assured them. "Madame is going to bed; that is all."

This explanation made the young people laugh, but Ménard was not at ease until he was certain that the landlady slept on the same floor as himself. He would not have consented to pass the night below a woman who shook the whole house when she turned over. It was bad enough to be under the same roof with her.

The white wine was a little better than the red, and it enabled them to eat an omelette with parsley, which Dubourg tried in vain to pass off for tarragon.

For dessert they could offer the travellers nothing but Gerome cheese; and indeed it was best that it should come to the table alone, for its odor was so strong that Frederic took flight, and went to bed in the farther room, giving Goton orders to call him at daylight. He did not wish to prolong his stay at the inn longer than was absolutely necessary.

M. Ménard believed that he ought to be agreeable to the Baron. Dubourg continued to pour him bumpers of wine and went into ecstasies over the flavor of the aniseed cheese. It recalled to him,

he said, that which he had eaten in Switzerland; and this assertion killed all the old tutor's desire to lunch or sup in a châlet.

"Yes, Monsieur Ménard," said Dubourg, "if you go to Gruyére, a little town of Switzerland renowned for its cheese,—and in fact this constitutes all the wealth of the people,—you will smell its odor a league away from the cottages in which it is made. If you sleep a night in one of the châlets, you smell cheese for eight days; and they say this is excellent for the lungs. But you must be in need of sleep, Monsieur Ménard. Don't let me detain you; go to bed. I shall pass the night in writing."

"Ah, your excellency, I should not dare to take the liberty before you."

"And why not? Diogenes went to bed in his barrel before Alexander, and Crates did not hesitate to show his back to his fellow-citizens."

"As you command, your excellency."

"I don't wish you to expose yourself to me, but I wish you to go to bed just as if I were not here."

Weariness and white wine combined to make Ménard very sleepy, and he did not wait for a second invitation. He therefore passed behind the flowered curtains and prepared himself for slumber. In the mean while, Dubourg seated himself in a corner of the room, before a table, and made a pretence of examining papers and taking notes. He waited with impatience until the tutor had

gone to sleep, so that he could give the postilion of his coach the signal for departure. He was afraid that Ménard might wake early, and it would then be very embarrassing if his coach were not a distance away from the village. It was for this reason that he hastened the departure of the postilion.

The gate of the court was not closed. Goton alone would be up to see what went on, and Dubourg knew the way to ensure her discretion.

It was nearly a quarter of an hour since Ménard had disappeared behind his curtains. Dubourg believed him asleep, and was about to go down stairs, when he heard a groan of distress from the side of the bed.

"Are you not well, Monsieur Ménard?" he asked; and, approaching the bed, he pushed the curtains lightly aside. But what was his surprise to find poor Ménard, in shirt and drawers and nightcap, standing beside the bed, and making vain efforts to climb into it by the aid of a low chair which did not elevate his short legs to the height of the mattress.

"What, Monsieur Ménard! Are you not yet in bed?"

"No, your excellency! For ten minutes I have been trying to climb into this bed. Is it not a horror? It is a mockery to travellers to give them beds which reach to the ceiling. Everybody is not six feet tall, and you would need to be a giant!"

"Never mind; don't be disturbed, Monsieur Ménard. Why did you not ask me to help you?"

"Ah, your excellency, I would not have dared to take such a liberty."

"You were wrong, for you know you can't spend the night trying to climb into bed."

Without waiting for his response, Dubourg helped Ménard to mount the chair; then he pushed vigorously, placing his hands upon that round part of his anatomy which the tutor had difficulty in lifting, and so was able to hoist him into his bed.

"Sic itur ad astra," said Dubourg.

"Labor improbus omnia vincit," replied Ménard, endeavoring to seize his bolster.

"Ouf!" cried Dubourg.

"I am there, your excellency!" exclaimed Ménard, delighted to be at last in bed.

"That's fortunate. Good-night, then!"

"A thousand thanks, your excellency!"

Dubourg left the bed and was careful to remove the chair which had been placed against it. By this means it was certain that Ménard would not leave his bed until Dubourg so wished. This precaution might put Ménard in a very unfortunate situation, as the result proved.

The tutor had not been in bed more than five minutes before he was snoring profoundly.

"Good! Now he is quiet," said Dubourg, and taking the light he descended softly into the court.

As he passed the dining-room he glanced in. Two of the pedlers were asleep upon the table, and the two others were still drinking; but it looked very much as if they would soon be in the same state as their companions. Dubourg sought out his postilion, and, putting a hundred-sou piece in his hand, told him to set forth immediately. In a moment the horses were harnessed, and the coach of the noble palatine was a long way off from the inn and the village.

"But how will you get away tomorrow?" asked Goton, who had come out to join Dubourg in the court, and stood looking after the receding carriage.

"Oh, we have another carriage, a good post-chaise, which they have been mending. I will tell you what story I want you to repeat, as to what I have just done, Goton. Do you understand?"

As he said this Dubourg slipped two coins into the servant's pocket. This was more than the poor girl often received for six months in this miserable inn, and the sight of the two round, glittering pieces made her as docile as a lamb.

"Oh, that's enough," she said, while Dubourg threw his arms about her robust figure. "I'll say whatever you want; do you see? It was your coach, and you were the master. O good Lord! you tickle me! Don't pinch so hard! Oh, you're foolish, now!"

"Where is your chamber, Goton?"

"My chamber! Oh, I have no chamber! I sleep down there,—look,—in the little stable with the cow. I have only a thick straw tick on the ground for a bed, and no covers; for the mistress says in summer you don't need covers. But anyway, I am not cold, for Bebelle keeps me warm."

"And who is Bebelle, I should like to know?"

"Why, it's our cow! Didn't you know that? Oh, she is so gentle! Stop pinching; you pinch too hard!"

"Come, let's go to your room; we can talk better there. The stable will be a boudoir, Goton, with you in it."

"But what is a boudoir?"

"Come on and I'll teach you."

"But what about the pedlers?"

"They don't need you. Haven't they paid their bill?"

"Oh, yes; and anyway, my master knows them."

"Then it's useless for you to watch any longer."

"But if they should want anything?"

"Two of them are already sound asleep, and the other two are pretty nearly there. Come on, I tell you! It's nonsense to wait till daylight for them; and you need rest yourself, Goton."

The maid was half conquered. She no longer resisted Dubourg's reasoning, and allowed him to draw her toward the stable, which they both

entered, pulling the door close after them. It was merely fastened outside by an iron bar; but the servant slept there fearlessly, for she had no dread of thieves.

In the mean time one of the travelling pedlers was not asleep. He was thinking of Goton also, and he waited until his companions were deep in slumber, to try and find the pretty maid. This man had noticed that one of the strangers was interested in Mademoiselle Goton, and that had put him in a bad humor; but he did not dare to keep too close a watch, because the memory of the pistols made him respectful.

When his three companions had each sunk over the table with his head in his hands, he rose softly and prepared to look for Goton, with whose sleeping apartment he was familiar. He did not take a light, for he did not wish to betray his quest, and advanced at a wolf's pace to the stable.

He was not ten steps from the building, and he already heard two voices saying very pretty things to each other. He approached still nearer, and easily seized the thread of the discourse; for Dubourg and Goton believed themselves surrounded by animals, and gave themselves up without reserve to the pleasures of conversation.

The pedler was furious, but how should he revenge himself? He did not care to pick a quarrel with Dubourg. It would be a waste of time to call the landlord. The dear man and his wife shut

themselves up, and barricaded themselves, so as not to be disturbed. Then, after all, what did they care as to how their servant spent her nights? It was probable they did not hold themselves responsible for Goton's habits.

The pedler decided to play a trick on the two lovers. He thought of nothing better than to drop the iron bar very softly, which fastened the door of the stable from the outside. Then he went away, delighted, saying to himself, —

"You will not get out of there till someone comes to deliver you; for the door is solid, and I defy you to break it."

Our man went to rejoin his companions. Soon the day began to dawn. It was the hour when their business compelled the pedlers to begin their journey. They were soon on foot, and as they gathered up their bundles they listened to the story of the trick their companion had played the stranger. All applauded, delighted to be avenged upon a man who was not afraid of their cudgels, and left the inn, smiling at the scene which would take place there in the morning.

While these events were passing, Ménard did not continue to rest so tranquilly as in the beginning. The white wine, of which the Baron had poured him such frequent potations, had produced its effect. Ménard awakened. He turned; he stretched his arm outside his bed to find the chair, which would aid him to descend. In these

wretched inns there was no such thing as a bedside table, and he felt that he must get up.

But it was in vain that he extended his arm and felt on all sides. There was no chair! How could he get out of a bed which almost touched the ceiling? He listened. He heard nothing. He pushed aside the curtains. The most profound obscurity reigned in the apartment. The Baron must be asleep on a chair, as he had planned. Besides, how could he dare ask the palatine of Rava to do service as his valet? Still, if he threw himself out of bed he ran the risk of hurting himself, or at least of not being able to get back again. All this was very embarrassing, and poor Ménard, sitting up straight in bed, grew every moment more miserable.

Necessity knows no law, says an old proverb; and then, the Baron was so good, so obliging, so accommodating! All this emboldened Ménard. He coughed, lightly at first, then a little louder; then he ventured to say very low,—

"Baron, if you are not asleep, might I venture to ask your aid? I am a little embarrassed, Baron."

But at that moment Baron Dubourg was with Goton, occupied in teaching her what a boudoir is, and that a garret, a grove, an attic, a grotto, a kitchen, a cellar, even a stable, can merit this name when one is with the person he loves. Goton comprehended this perfectly, because she was quick

to understand; and Dubourg made an excellent monitor.

"The Baron seems to sleep very soundly," said Ménard to himself. "Cursed inn! infernal bed! where I cannot turn around without scratching my sides! I believe the mattress is made of oat straw. There! no matter what happens, I will try to get out."

Ménard already had one of his little legs out of bed, and he was about to advance the other when a horrible noise was heard in the room. A chair was overturned, a vase which was upon it fell and was broken, several objects glided along the walls, then fled, pushing open the door which gave egress to the landing. Ménard was frozen with terror. He called in a suffocated voice, —

"Baron! Baron! Monsieur, is it you?"

No one answered. The poor man no longer felt the courage to leave his bed. He shrank under his covers, buried his head in the blankets, and his fright removed all necessity for leaving his bed. He went to sleep without further trouble; for they were neither thieves nor demons which caused the disturbance in his chamber, but merely two cats, which found the door open, and came in to visit their ordinary home. They disputed over a morsel of rabbit, which the Baron had thrown under the table while he assured his companions that it was excellent. The two Toms overturned a chair on which was a pitcher of water; the fall terrified

them, so that they fled down the stairs, abandoning the object of the contention.

Day came at last. The innkeeper left his chaste half, who rose at six in order to be dressed by nine. Frederic awoke; Ménard did the same, and turned uncomfortably in his bed, where he was very ill at ease. Dubourg had nothing more to teach Goton, and wished to regain his room. But it was in vain that he sought to leave the stable. He pushed and shook the door for five minutes, but it would not open.

"Goton, Goton, how have you fastened this door?" said Dubourg.

"Bah! it does not fasten," replied the stout girl, rubbing her eyes.

"But I can't open it."

"Push hard."

"I am pushing as hard as I can, but it will not open."

"Oh, what weaklings these city men are!" said the servant. She gave a stout blow of her fist to the door, but it did not stir.

"Zounds! They must have put the bar across outside."

"Who the devil would have played us such a trick as that?"

"Indeed, now! It must have been one of the pedlers. Because they were casting sheep's-eyes at me, you see; and perhaps they might have seen that you were here."

"I don't want to spend the day in the stable!"

"I will milk the cow for you."

"Much obliged!"

"You can tell me some stories."

"I don't know any more. This smell of the cow, and the manure, — it affects my head."

"What! But a while ago you said that the stable was a little — what was it now? — a little boudoir, — very nice with me!"

"Yes, but a while ago and the present are two different things. No place can please us, Goton, if we are forced to stay in it. But it is broad day. If this little window were not so narrow one could get out there."

"Oh, it is not possible."

"Ah, an idea! That is it! You must make use of circumstances. Come to this stone, Goton. Mount with me, so that we can reach the height of the window, and shout as I do."

"But what shall I say?"

"Shout just what I do."

Dubourg put his head in the opening above the door and began to cry with all his might, —

"Thieves! Help! Stop the carriage! Stop thief!"

Goton whispered, astonished, —

"But where are the thieves?"

Dubourg said severely, "Are you going to do what I told you?"

"All right; I'll shout," said the servant, "if it amuses you."

Goton's huge voice mingled with that of Dubourg, and in a moment roused all the household, and set a large part of the village on foot.

The landlord ran as fast as his left leg would let him, for it was two inches shorter than the right. Frederic hurried from his chamber; Ménard sat up, and by the aid of his pupil gained the floor. He slipped on his coat and hastened after Frederic, much more excited than he. Frederic had recognized the voice of Dubourg, and, more curious than disturbed, did not doubt that he would see a new tragedy of the Baron's invention. All the neighborhood gathered in the court. The inhabitants of the vicinity ran in, and some workmen going to their daily labor joined the crowd attracted by the cries of Dubourg, who did not stop repeating, —

"Catch the thief! Stop the carriage!"

Everybody turned, no one saw the carriage, and Goton shouted in an ear-splitting voice, —

"The Baron's coach has been carried off!"

Someone hurried to the stable and opened the door, and Dubourg rushed out like a madman, crying, shouting, raging about the court as if he had lost his wits, not noticing that his trousers were stained by contact with the stable.

"What is the matter, dear Baron," asked Ménard with terror.

"What is it? My coach! That scoundrel of a postilion! He has run off! He has carried it

away, with fifty thousand francs in gold in one of my trunks!"

"O my God!"

"My father's coach! The Potoski carriage! I don't mind the money — but a coach in which the princess of Hungary — O my friends! run in every direction! try all the roads! A hundred louis to the one who brings it back!"

"A hundred louis to the one who brings back the coach!" cried Goton.

"They'll be very lucky if they find it," said Dubourg under his breath. "It must be near Paris by this time."

"But how did you happen to be shut up in the stable with Goton?" asked the innkeeper.

"That is not hard to understand. In the night I heard a noise in the court. I descended softly, and there I found my rascal of a postilion harnessing the horses and intending to slip away while we slept. Unhappily I did not have my pistols, and this postilion is a lusty scoundrel, stronger than I. I started to run for help, but the fellow seized me, and, in spite of my resistance, forced me into the stable, where this girls sleeps, and where he imprisoned us. We began to shout immediately, but you slept like the dead."

"Yes, that is all true," declared Goton, who began to understand now why Dubourg wanted her to cry "Stop thief."

"We will have to send to the mayor," said

Ménard. "He will call out the police. You have a mayor here?"

"Yes, monsieur; it is the wine merchant of the neighborhood. But to get the police you will have to send to the next village, and that will take two hours at least."

"Don't be disturbed, dear Ménard," said Frederic, smiling. "We have a good post-chaise to replace the Baron's coach."

"But, your excellency — fifty thousand francs in gold!"

"Oh, it is not the loss of this sum which troubles me!" cried Dubourg. "My fortune is beyond such a reverse. Fortunately, there are fifteen thousand francs in my pocketbook, to meet the first expenses of my journey. I regret my wardrobe; it was in an enormous trunk concealed under the carriage. All my linen and my different costumes, alas!"

"You certainly need a change of clothes," remarked Frederic, glancing maliciously at Dubourg and Goton. "You seem to have had a fall in the stable."

"You can be sure I did not stay there willingly," replied Dubourg, returning Frederic's look with one which seemed to say, You need not have called attention to that. "Ask Goton how that rascal pushed me."

"Oh, yes, indeed he did!" cried the girl. "He knocked you down more than four times!"

"Anyway, dear friend, my wardrobe is at your service," said Frederic.

"And mine also, Baron," added Ménard, saluting Dubourg. He then returned to his chamber to finish dressing, while Dubourg assured him he would go and carry his complaint to the mayor.

Frederic's postilion soon appeared, and informed them that the post-chaise was ready for departure.

Ménard descended from his chamber, blessing Heaven that the time had come to leave this inn, which had been so unsatisfactory a harbor for them, and had given their journey so unpleasant a beginning.

Goton had a last word to say in the ear of Dubourg, and the Baron was very happy to see the end of his adventure, especially without loss of caste with the friendly and obsequious Ménard.

The chaise awaited the travellers, and each one mounted it with pleasure. Dubourg was enchanted to be rid of his coach; Ménard was anxious to get as far as possible from the cats, the beds and ragouts of the inn; and Frederic was much happier in his own travelling carriage, which was roomy and well hung, than in the dilapidated coach of the Baron.

Ménard breathed some sighs over the place which had been occupied by a princess of Hungary; but he knew that he was still near the snuff-box of the King of Prussia, and he had hopes of drinking Tokay from the cave of Tékély.

CHAPTER VI

The Little Wood

Our travellers arrived without mishap at the neighboring village, where they stopped for breakfast. Ménard was lost in admiration of the composure with which his noble companion sustained the double loss of the fifty thousand francs and his carriage.

"I am somewhat of a philosopher, Monsieur Ménard," said Dubourg, "and I care little for fortune; indeed, I believe that I should prefer mediocrity to a more elevated station: 'Magnus servitus est magna fortuna.'"

"You are not an ordinary man, my dear Dubourg, I am assured of it by the manner in which you sustain the most annoying reverses," said Frederic, "there are so many people who are philosophical only in good fortune, like those cowards who vaunt their courage when the danger is passed."

"Certainly," said M. Ménard, "I am not in the least ambitious, and I know how to submit to circumstances; however, I find that it requires great decision, and great strength of mind to renounce indifferently a good table and a good

bed; and when I say a good bed, I do not mean a high bed."

At the end of the breakfast Dubourg discovered that M. Ménard paid the bill.

"Do you mean to say that you do not carry the purse?" he said to Frederic.

"No; my father put M. Ménard in charge of the funds."

"The devil! That's too bad. When he sees that I never pay what will he think?"

"But when you said you had been robbed, why did you tell that you had still fifteen thousand francs in your pocketbook?"

"Ah, why, why!" cried Dubourg, striking his forehead; "because I wanted to play the grand gentleman, and not let your companion think that you paid for me."

"I do not dare ask Ménard for the funds; I am afraid it would hurt his feelings."

"Don't bother; I'll see that he gives them up voluntarily."

"How?"

"You will see."

"If you hold the cashbox, don't play the gentleman too fast. Remember this money must last us a long time."

"Do you think me still a heedless gambler, as I was at Paris? No, dear Frederic; I am too happy to travel with you to be guilty of follies. I repeat that I shall be a second mentor."

"Yes; your adventure in the stable makes a pretty beginning."

"But I had to find a good lie for the coach."

"And did you have to shut yourself up with Mademoiselle Goton for that? Good-for-nothing!"

"Go on! don't be such a Cato! If Mademoiselle Goton had big eyes and a sentimental figure, you might have wanted to milk the cows with her yourself."

"Well, anyway, I beg you, don't tell so many gasconades to this good Ménard, for he believes every word you say. And I have told him, besides, that I know your family, and that you are very well thought of in Paris."

"That is very good. I will only say what I think is necessary to sustain my character. You must not forget that I have made myself a Polish nobleman."

"And is that the reason you talk all the time of Brittany?"

The travellers here returned to the carriage. Before they reached the town in which they were to spend the night they were to pass through a piece of very thick woodland. Dubourg had made his plans, and he began to give a serious turn to the conversation; for he knew that the mood of the individual increases or diminishes the importance of events or circumstances, and that in the world, as in the theatre, we must often

lead up to climaxes, and prepare for them, or they lose their effect.

"I know nothing better than the pleasure of travelling," said Dubourg. "Why should we be so often troubled with the thought that an unfortunate accident may disarrange all our plans?"

"It is the same with all the joys of life," replied Frederic. "Do you know any upon which we can count for the morrow? It is a great happiness to be loved by the woman whom one adores; but in the very moment that you count on pleasing her, that you are sure of her heart, of her oaths, a young Adonis arrives, who claims her, a gay warrior turns her head, a brilliant mind fascinates her; and the woman whom you could trust until then betrays you in the moment when you counted most upon her love. Alas! the happiness of our whole future depends often on a slight accident, and as a result of it the edifice crumbles like a house of cards."

"M. de Montreville speaks very wisely," said Ménard. "One is often deceived in his hopes. How often have I dined at a celebrated restaurant, and found the soup a complete failure!"

"A philosopher always endures these reverses either of fortune, of love or of pleasure," said Dubourg; "but there are some things against which philosophy is no protection. For instance, if you are attacked upon the road and assassinated by brigands."

These words made Ménard tremble. His face lengthened. His look became perturbed, and he glanced at Dubourg, whose countenance wore a sombre expression and anything but reassuring.

"Such things are indeed very dangerous for travellers. They say that it is very risky to cross Italy. You have travelled so much, your excellency, you can probably tell us."

"No doubt, Monsieur Ménard, there are brigands in Italy. The peculiarity of that country is that noon is the most dangerous hour there, for then the brigands alone will brave the heat of the sun. But the fact is that if there are brigands in the Apennines, in Germany and in England, unhappily there are also brigands in France. It is now almost as dangerous to travel there."

"What! in France, Baron? I supposed the roads were perfectly safe here."

"I am afraid you don't read the papers, Monsieur Ménard."

"Very rarely, your excellency."

"If you did, you would see that the forests of Senart, of Bondy, of Fontainebleau and of Villers-Cotterets all have their bands of thieves."

"O my God!"

"Unfortunately, these rascals become every day more ferocious. Formerly they were satisfied with robbing you; but now they beat you unmercifully, and it is good fortune if they do not leave you dead upon the spot."

"The devil! the devil!" exclaimed Ménard, looking anxiously about, and glancing up and down the road. The travellers at that moment entered the wood.

"But do not be troubled, Monsieur Ménard," continued Dubourg. "As a rule the robbers seize only the person who carries the money, who pays for the others. They usually tie him to a tree; but first they take off all his clothes, so that he is naked as a worm. In this way they are sure that there is nothing concealed in his clothes, you see."

"But, Baron, this does trouble me very much, for I am the one who carries our travelling purse."

"Ah, if I had known that I would not have said so much. I thought of course Frederic carried it. But in such a case you sell your life dearly. You have arms, of course. You carry pistols?"

"Your excellency, I never use them."

"But you will have to learn to use them. We are even now crossing a wood where three of my friends were killed."

"What! in this wood? But it does seem very thick indeed."

Ménard looked uneasily from right to left. Night had begun to fall, and the darkness which was soon to cover the earth increased his terror.

"Go as fast as you can, postilion!" he cried in an altered voice to their driver.

But the postilion had made a previous arrange-

ment with Dubourg, and therefore did not quicken his pace. Frederic said not a word, and seemed lost in his reflections. Dubourg had drawn his pistols from his pockets, and examined them with attention, glancing from time to time at the wood on either side.

"Zounds! Monsieur Ménard," said Dubourg, taking from his pocket an old worn green pocketbook which he had taken pains to stuff with his last restaurant ménu card, to make it as voluminous as possible, "here is my entire fortune for the moment. The fifteen thousand francs which I have left for travelling expenses are in this pocketbook. You have had the kindness to assume the care of Frederic's money; I thought perhaps you would be my cashier also. It is useless for two persons to pay at an inn. It will be better if you will attend to everything."

As he said this he handed the pocketbook to Ménard. The tutor looked at it while he reflected as to what he ought to do. He was much flattered by this mark of confidence, but he had no idea of accepting it.

Just then a sudden whistle sounded and resounded in the wood.

"O Heavens! What is that? What is that?" cried Dubourg, looking about him with a startled expression.

"Do you think we are going to be attacked, Baron?"

"Upon my word, I am afraid of it."

"And M. Frederic is asleep! Do wake him up immediately!"

Frederic had listened to the scene, and made pretence of being sound asleep.

"It is not necessary."

"Take these, Monsieur Ménard," said Dubourg, offering the tutor his pistols as well as his pocketbook; "they are loaded."

"Keep — keep — keep them, your excellency, please. If you wished you might defend it all better — much better than I can!"

Poor Ménard drew forth his pocketbook with one hand, and with the other a purse full of gold, casting upon Dubourg most supplicating glances as he did so.

"Indeed," said Dubourg, "I don't know that I ought to take your money. Perhaps Frederic would not be pleased that I —"

"No! oh, no, Baron! I am certain that he would approve."

"There are four men coming after us with guns!" cried the postilion.

"O my God! we are lost!" exclaimed Ménard.

"Give it — give it to me quick!" cried Dubourg, taking the pocketbook and the purse. "I see that it is my affair."

Ménard crawled under the seat. The postilion swore, shouted, and whipped the horses. Dubourg leaned out of the carriage and fired two pistol shots

in the air. Frederic made believe to wake suddenly. The carriage flew like the wind, and at the end of five minutes they were out of the wood.

"We are saved!" cried Dubourg, helping Ménard to rise.

"What! truly, Baron?"

"We are out of the wood. There is no more danger; but we have escaped beautifully — have we not, Frederic?"

"And the thieves, your excellency?"

"I killed two of them."

"And I saw two others run," said Frederic.

"Ah, Baron, how fortunate we are to have you with us!"

They reached the town in safety. Dubourg was enchanted to be the cashier, and he commenced his new office by slipping a piece of gold into the hand of the postilion, for the bit of whistling which he had done in the woodland.

CHAPTER VII

Dubourg Continues to Play the Gentleman. His Manner of Keeping the Cash

Our amiable friend Dubourg had never, in the whole course of his life, been the actual possessor of such a considerable sum of money as that which Ménard had just confided to his care. As a rule, young people are not in the habit of hoarding, and Dubourg, who was a great lover of play and constantly frequented gambling-houses for the purpose of indulging this passion, and who was, besides, fond of pleasure and good living; who was also one of those persons who are always wholly occupied with the present, entirely oblivious of the past, and who never allow themselves, no matter how pressing their circumstances may be, the smallest degree of anxiety in regard to the future; — had not acquired the commendable habit of practising economy.

During the time that he was employed as a clerk in a government office, the debts incurred for his expenses and maintenance had been so heavy that he had never handled more than a third of his salary, and, as a rule, that third very seldom remained in his hands for more than

three days, but during that time Dubourg lived like the head of a department.

In the banking-house he was obliged to work harder, and he consoled himself by the delicate lunches he had brought to him; so that the charges of the coffee-house and restaurant keepers ate up a large part of what the cashier paid him each month.

When he was with the notary he fell into the habit of playing écarté, which was prevalent among the students. Then it was much worse; a month's pay was often dissipated in a single evening. He was fortunate indeed if he did not pledge the succeeding one also.

While he was with the lawyer, he was constantly in attendance upon his employer's wife, whom her husband confided to his care. He thus lost entirely the habit of work. He sought pleasure parties constantly, and wished only to follow the fashions, to eclipse in every way the fashionable young élégants of the capital. Thus his tailor, his bootmaker and his stableman divided his income.

If the old aunt sent him money, it was never a very large sum. The largest gift she had made was that of the five hundred francs, which she sent as the result of his story of his marriage and the three children; and we have seen what use he made of that.

To possess eight thousand francs — for the sum was almost complete — was for Dubourg like hav-

ing a fortune to which there was no end. This sum did not exactly belong to him; but he could direct its employment, he could use it as he saw fit, and he was certain that no one would ask him to account for its expenditure. He would not have appropriated a penny of this money to his own use, but he wished to do honor to those to whom it belonged, and was not at all unwilling to enjoy it with them.

Dubourg therefore ordered an exquisite supper to be served to the travellers in their apartments, which were the most beautiful in the hotel.

At sight of the collation with which the table was loaded, Frederic cried,—

"Are you crazy, Dubourg?" He continued to give him this name in the presence of Ménard, who was no longer surprised at it. "There is supper enough here for ten people."

"My dear Frederic, I have a good appetite and am disposed to do honor to it, and I am sure M. Ménard will second me."

"With infinite pleasure, Baron. This adventure in the wood has made my stomach perfectly empty."

"But I will wager that you have necessitated a slim diet to all the other travellers in the hotel."

"My faith! let them eat what they can get. I think we have a right to allow ourselves a little extra for the horrible supper we had yesterday in that miserable inn."

"I agree with the Baron. We are truly in need of refreshment."

"But —"

"And what the devil will you have! Shall we travel like wolves? Shall we eat at a table d'hôte like wretched tramps? We must keep up our rank, dear friend, and I feel that my stomach is not disposed to deny it."

"The Baron speaks wisely. It is quite necessary to keep up our rank," said Ménard, as he accepted the wing of a roast capon which Dubourg presented to him. "You know that was the wish of the Count, your father."

"Yes, my friend," continued Dubourg, pouring some wine, which was the oldest and finest the cellar of the hotel could furnish, "I think you should obey the Count, your father; and my faith! all things considered, I don't see why I should preserve an incognito any longer. I am now far from Paris. It is settled! I will resume my titles, and I wish to receive the honors that are due me."

"Ah, Dubourg, Dubourg, you will still do foolish things, I am afraid," said Frederic to his friend sotto voce. But Dubourg did not listen. He was in an ecstasy. He had never felt so happy. He poured himself glass after glass of wine, while Ménard helped himself voluptuously to a mushroom pie, the delicious odor of which tempted him agreeably.

"What do you think of my plan, Monsieur Ménard?"

"You know, your excellency, that I have always wished your rank known."

"Very good; I am baron, palatine, etc., and we will prove it wherever we go."

"Surely, Baron, people will always recognize that from the nobleness of your manners."

"Bravo, monsieur! That speech is worthy of your convivial spirit. But Frederic is unworthy of sitting at our table. Won't you have a little of this hare, Monsieur Ménard?"

"Gladly, Baron."

"One must be a philosopher — when there is nothing else to do; but good philosophy consists in enjoying life and finding amusement whenever there's a chance. Horace has said, 'Dulce est desipere in loco.' Isn't that so, Monsieur Ménard?"

"Yes, Baron; but Juvenal recommends a rare use of pleasure, — 'Voluptatis commendat rarior usus.'"

"Don't you suppose that Juvenal had a bad stomach?"

"That is very possible, your excellency."

"Take one glass more, Monsieur Ménard, in memory of Anacreon, Horace, Epicurus, and all the great bons vivants."

"We forget Lucullus, Baron."

"That's right; let us pour another bumper for Lucullus."

As a result of drinking so much to the memory of the ancients, the two banqueters began to lose thought of the present, and Dubourg cried, as he rose from the table, —

"My faith! I defy all the palatines of Rava, of Cracovia and of Krapach to make a better supper!"

"Take care what you do, you confounded prattler," muttered Frederic, aside.

"Don't be worried," replied Dubourg, shouting a little louder; "I tell you that I will be responsible for all, and that Papa Ménard is a man whom I esteem, whom I love; and I will close his eyes with pheasants and truffles."

It was fortunate that Ménard had reached a point where he heard only confusedly what was said around him. He felt that he was beginning to be overcome by the frequent libations which he had taken with his noble companion, and he rose from the table to seek his chamber. He felt his way along the walls, and reached his bed at last, which he requested should be made up very low.

He went to his repose well satisfied with the repast he had made, and much pleased with the manner in which the Baron had done the honors of the table. He congratulated himself that he had been wise enough to put the funds in the Baron's care, for he would not have dared order such a delicate supper. He foresaw that the Baron

would see to it that they were most delicately served, for he seemed both a gormand and a gourmet; and, now that he had renounced his incognito, he would wish everything expensive as befitted a grand seigneur. In fact, Ménard was enchanted with their travelling companion, and he went to sleep reflecting on the honors and pleasures which this journey would bring him.

The day following the supper Frederic thought it best to reason a little with Dubourg.

"Do you wish to take back the cashbox?" said Dubourg. "Take it and order as you please; you are the master. But, lost as you are in your melancholy reveries, you will order very poor dinners; and when you are travelling for pleasure it seems to me quite essential that meals should be comfortably arranged."

"But at least be reasonable."

"Yes, and are you not very much to be pitied, because you have with you two men who will keep you in good spirits, one by his wit, and the other from the enthusiasm with which he makes a partridge disappear?"

"But where is the sense in this idea of playing the grand gentleman before all the world?"

"Because we will amuse ourselves better. Besides, you are a count, and to travel as your equal I must at least be a baron."

"But the strong box will be emptied much more quickly."

"True; but we shall not see the end of it for a long time; and then, you know, you have a father and I have an aunt."

"Yes; I advise you to think of that."

"But you see that your mentor approves of me."

"By Heavens, you make him so tipsy that he no longer knows what he is talking about!"

"Never mind; I will be responsible for everything."

Our travellers were once more en route. The horses, which belonged to Frederic, were driven like the wind. Ménard was a little astonished at this fashion of travelling; but he said, "Ah, well, great gentlemen are accustomed to riding at this rapid pace," and so he hung on to the curtain to keep from falling, and was well content.

At all the inns everyone made a point of treating them like grand gentlemen. They were invariably given the best rooms, the finest foods were served to them, and the very oldest wines were found on their table. Ménard was astonished, enchanted, because he believed that his excellency the Baron had joined his fifteen thousand francs to the sum which was put in his care; and he considered him too great, too generous, to trouble himself about any difference in the proportion of payment.

Our travellers reached Lyons in this manner. They had paused upon the way only to admire

the view occasionally, and to give their horses time to breathe. They intended, however, to pass several days at Lyons. The young Montreville was delighted to see it, to become familiar with its neighborhood, and to stroll upon the banks of the Rhône. His two companions were perfectly willing to stay some little time in a city where they could live as luxuriously as at Paris.

Our travellers stopped at one of the best hotels of the city, and they immediately attracted much attention. Dubourg was always noticeable because of the air of authority which he assumed, and Frederic was remarked on account of his unusual figure and bearing. The party was evidently extravagant, and lived at large expense; and this is sure to be a popular recommendation in a hotel. If they had all failed of attracting attention themselves, they would have become the observed of all observers through the care which Ménard took to have his companions recognized.

"You have the honor of lodging his excellency the Baron Potoski, palatine of Rava," he said, "and the young Count of Montreville."

The travellers occupied a superb apartment on the first floor. Their meals were served in their rooms. They had the best of cheer. Dubourg ordered everything. Frederic left all details in his care, but he repeated his injunction to be careful.

"Take care what you do," he said; and Du-

bourg responded, "Don't worry," with such assurance that the young count ended by letting him manage all without any restrictions.

As to Ménard, he was more than ever enthusiastic over the Baron, who led him into such a very agreeable way of life. Frederic went out alone to stroll upon the banks of the Rhône, and, charmed by the enchanting scenery which he discovered, he often did not return to the hotel until evening or the next day.

Dubourg, like all liars, who end in believing their own humbuggery, had so identified himself with the personage he represented that he would have come to blows with anyone who insinuated a doubt as to his rank. It delighted him during the absence of his friend to exhibit his magnificence to the entire city.

He walked out with Ménard, his arm carelessly locked in that of the tutor; and the manner of both was sure to excite comment. Ménard wore his hat pushed back on his head, in order to see and hear better. He held himself very erect, walked with much precision, and endeavored to assume a noble and gracious air, when he went out with his excellency the Baron. Dubourg promenaded all over the city, his head covered with a huge three-cornered hat, doubled in size by a black plume, and ornamented by a steel cord, placing it on his head after the fashion of the marquis of Molière. The remainder of his

costume did not correspond at all with the hat; but men no longer wear embroidered coats, in promenading the streets, and Dubourg was obliged to satisfy himself with putting silver tassels on his boots à la hussarde. He felt sure that this must look very Polish. He wore his coat open, because that gave him a freer air; and he made constant use of an enormous lorgnette hung about his neck by a red ribbon.

The unusual dress of Dubourg attracted all eyes. Some took him for an Englishman, some for a Russian, others for a Prussian; but whenever any curious person paused and smiled while he looked him over, Dubourg levelled a glance at him which deprived him of all desire to laugh at his expense, and convinced him that, whoever the stranger might be, he was not of a temper to endure laughter at his expense.

If anyone walked near our travellers for any length of time, he would not be slow to learn who was the gentleman in the plumed hat, who swaggered so agreeably when he used his eyeglass. Ménard talked very loud, especially if he perceived that he was observed. When he addressed his companion he did not fail to give him his titles. He emphasized "Baron Potoski," "palatine." He even went so far, sometimes, as "prince of Rava and Sandomir"!

For eight days they had been at Lyons. Frederic had not wearied in the least of visiting the

delightful suburbs of the city, but Dubourg began to find it somewhat tiresome to show himself on the promenades about town, his arm supported on that of M. Ménard. They had visited all the points of interest, all the theatres, all the cafés; everywhere Dubourg had played the grand gentleman, and Ménard the comrade without suspicion. The poor tutor had the most perfect faith, and felt highly honored to go about so, with the noble friend of his pupil; and he was always lost in admiration at his appropriate quotations, and his endless stories of travel in the four quarters of the globe.

For some days Dubourg had been urging Frederic to leave Lyons, and the young count constantly postponed their departure until the next day. At last one morning Dubourg received a letter which deprived him of all desire to go farther.

This letter was addressed to "His Excellency the Baron Potoski, Polish nobleman." Dubourg read the address twice. "Who can have written it? Who gave him my name?" he said. He asked his landlady who had brought the letter.

"It was," she said, "a servant in livery, who had been told to give the letter only to the Baron himself."

Dubourg hastily broke the seal, and read the following note: —

His Excellency the Baron Potoski is invited to spend the

evening with Madame the Marquise de Versac, who will be charmed to possess the noble stranger occasionally during his stay in the city.

The address of the Marquise was at the end of the note, which diffused an odor of musk and ambergris through the apartment. Dubourg read it several times.

"The devil!" said Dubourg. "An invitation from a marquise! That's flattering enough. How did she hear of me? Oh, well, you are soon known when you begin to live in a certain style. For the last week I have been walking about the town with Ménard like a great white bear, and no doubt everyone has begun to talk about me."

Dubourg called the landlady again and asked her if she knew Madame de Versac.

"The Marquise de Versac? I am not acquainted with her, monsieur, but I know her well by name and repute. The family is one of the oldest and richest of the city, and I know that madame has a country-seat on the banks of the Rhône about four leagues from the city."

Dubourg asked nothing more. He was enchanted. He dismissed his hostess, and walked about his room, saying with delight, —

"Certainly I will accept the invitation of Madame the Marquise. It is an acquaintance which can be nothing but agreeable to me: and how can I tell; perhaps I shall find some baroness or viscountess whose head I can turn, and who will

marry me and give me lands, castles. Well, well; that would not be so surprising. I am young; I am not bad-looking; I have a certain air, which probably has attracted Madame de Versac, and — well, supposing she herself — oh, I have forgotten to ask the landlady!"

Dubourg rang; again the landlady appeared.

"Pardon me, my dear madame," he said; "I have some reason for wishing to know if Madame the Marquise de Versac is married."

"She must be a widow, monsieur," replied the landlady. "M. de Versac died three years ago, and I have heard nothing of her since."

"Thank you! That is very good indeed, madame," said Dubourg, dismissing his landlady. He fairly leaped with joy, and rushed to the mirror to reassure himself as to the good looks which had evidently attracted Madame de Versac.

"She is a widow! She must be still a widow, or the invitation would have the name of her husband. This becomes very interesting. A young widow who is very rich and who has a magnificent country house writes to me that she will be charmed to possess me! That is what she says. I will read it again. Yes, charmed to possess me! It seems to me that there is almost a declaration of love. You shall possess me, delightful woman; I promise that. Ah, I forgot to ask if she is pretty. Of course she cannot be otherwise; but anyway, I do not care much for mere beauty; I

am reasonable, and I want the more substantial attractions. This evening she will see the noble stranger. Oh, the devil! but what will she think when she finds that he is only a plain citizen? After all, I am a good Breton, and I am as good as anyone. Besides, we have not reached the explanatory point yet. I must begin by attracting her. When a woman is once in love she forgets ranks, differences. Love equalizes all. The god of thunders was smitten with simple mortals, and was not the shepherd Paris the beloved of Venus herself? I will give Madame de Versac all the apples she wants if she will only choose me."

Ménard entered as Dubourg was promenading about, endeavoring to give himself the airs of the court. As soon as he saw the tutor he stuck the letter under his nose, exclaiming, —

"Tolle, lege, my dear Ménard." Ménard retreated because the odor of musk which the note exhaled was unpleasant to him.

"I hope that this is the favorite perfume of Madame la Marquise," exclaimed Dubourg, sniffing luxuriously the scented missive. "Look here, Ménard; what do you say to this letter?"

"I don't see anything surprising in that, Baron, for you must be accustomed to things of that sort wherever you go."

"That is true; you are right, Ménard. I am not saying that the letter is surprising, but it is very well phrased — is it not?"

"Very well phrased."

"It seems to show a woman who is pretty sure of herself — does it not?"

"Certainly it does, your excellency."

"But it is not at all like the notes that the little Delphine used to write me."

"And who was the little Delphine, monsieur?"

"Ah, she was a little countess of the Boulevard du Temple, and her house was a sort of rendezvous for men of my rank."

"You will accept the invitation of Madame la Marquise — will you not, Baron?"

"Shall I accept it? Oh, certainly. Let us dine early, Monsieur Ménard, so that I shall have more time for my toilet. Where is Frederic?"

"No doubt he is visiting some new spot. He warned me that he would not return until this evening. He expects to leave tomorrow."

"Oh, tomorrow? Well, we will see. We have plenty of time, and it is very pleasant in Lyons — is it not, Monsieur Ménard?"

"Delightful, your excellency; but you know we expect to travel, to see —"

"I know. I know that we should not leave a city like this, until we know it thoroughly; and Frederic cannot do that when he is always in the suburbs. We ought to persuade him of that, M. Ménard."

"I will do my best, your excellency."

Dubourg did not dine. He was too much

absorbed in his evening's project to have much appetite. A child does not eat when it expects to go to the theatre. We are all big children, and the prospect of a new pleasure has the same effect.

Dubourg thought of his toilet. If he had been given more time he would have ordered a coat; but as it was he would have to be content with one of Frederic's, who was much more slender than he, so that he would have to wear it open. Should he wear boots? At the house of a marquise that would not be correct, surely. But what would he do for trousers? Those of Frederic were too small for him. Unfortunately, this garment is not like a coat, which you can leave unbuttoned. Ménard would lend him a pair, of course; but they would be too large. At length he decided to go in boots. He was a stranger and a Pole; that would be his excuse. Besides, his big silver tassels pleased him exceedingly.

It was only eight o'clock, and for more than an hour Dubourg had been dressed, walking up and down his apartment, his plumed hat under his arm, studying how to make very distinguished bows, how to smile with grace and to walk nobly. He had put the entire contents of his cashbox in his pocket, and as he had no watch he debated whether he should take off the steel ornament of his hat and attach it to his fob. It might, however, be recognized as the cord he usually wore on his

hat, and that would not do. He contented himself finally with a red ribbon, only allowing a tiny end of it to appear. Nine o'clock sounded at last. It was the fashionable hour of assembly. A carriage was waiting for him; he sprang in, and gave the driver the address which was upon the note of the Marquise.

The carriage stopped in a street which seemed deserted, and before a very shabby-looking house. Dubourg descended from his cab. There was no porter, and a footman on the lookout for arriving guests hastened to receive Dubourg, and mounted the staircase before him in order to show him the way. The staircase was anything but clean, and two lamps had been placed at the foot of it, which seemed very much surprised at finding themselves there. Dubourg, however, was absorbed in thinking how gallantly he should address the Marquise, when presented to her, and he did not observe the unattractive surroundings.

The footman opened a door to an apartment which served as antechamber. It was impossible for the sharpest eye to discover that it contained a vestige of furniture. It was very dimly lighted; but it was, nevertheless, easy to see that the walls were spotted with oil, and it was impossible to determine what had been the original color of the parquet floor, it was so dirty. But the footman hurried Dubourg through this first chamber, and, opening the door of the adjoining salon, he an-

nounced with great impressiveness, "His Excellency the Baron Potoski."

At this name there was a general movement in the salon, and a lady arose, and hurried forward to greet Dubourg, expressing infinite pleasure at receiving him there.

Dubourg poured forth all that he had in his head; he advanced, bowing to right and left, and at length threw himself upon a couch near the Marquise de Versac, and began to examine her more carefully. He saw that he was right not to have been misled by a chimera in the beginning. The mistress of the house was a woman who appeared to be about forty-five years old, in spite of the pains she had taken to rouge, to blacken her eyebrows, redden her lips and whiten her skin. She was dressed with elegance, but at the same time she did not seem to be accustomed to the management of her train. Her head was overburdened with flowers and ribbons, and a triple collar of pearls covered a neck which was yellow and wrinkled, and was fit companion to a pair of skeleton-like shoulders which the Marquise had the barbarity to expose as recklessly as if they would rejoice the eye.

Dubourg did not stop to analyze all that. He recalled what his landlady had told him, and tried to find the Marquise charming. She said to him the most flattering things, while he cast his eye over the apartment in which he was seated.

An ancient chandelier, suspended from the ceiling, lighted the salon, which was very large. The hangings had been very beautiful, but began to show decided marks of age. An immense carpet had been spread upon the floor, which it was evident had not been originally intended for a salon. The furniture was of two colors. There was a blue sofa, and some yellow arm-chairs, and the smaller chairs did not seem to belong together at all.

Instead of a clock an enormous bouquet stood on the mantelpiece, and there were a great many candles. A number of card-tables of different sizes completed the furnishings of the apartment, and everything appeared to Dubourg to be as ancient as the family of Madame de Versac.

After he had analyzed the salon Dubourg turned his attention to the company assembled. There were only three ladies besides the Marquise. One, who was about sixty years old, was called the Baroness, and she talked constantly of her estates, her châteaux, her property, her footmen. Her conversation was carried on in such loud tones that it became very tiresome, and it was impossible to avoid hearing all she said. A young lady, rather pretty, was present, who, on the contrary, scarcely opened her lips except to laugh. She seemed a little awkward, said nothing but "Yes" or "No," and was addressed as the Viscountess of Fairfignan. The third was about

thirty years old, and was called Madame de Grandcourt. She was stretched very elegantly upon a divan, and played the coquette, throwing languid glances at the men and rolling her eyes from one to the other. Her eyes had once been beautiful but had become so sunken and haggard that the eyebrows appeared to tower above them.

Seven or eight men formed the remainder of the company, each one giving himself the title of count, baron or chevalier. None of them, however, displayed any wealth or elegance in their dress. Monsieur the Chevalier wore a coat of which the sleeves were so short that they did not reach his wrists, and when he drew out his handkerchief he took care to turn his back to the assembled guests.

The Count wore lace ruffles which were torn, and a shirt frill which was soiled with liquors and tobacco. He displayed his hand with much complacency, for it glittered with rings in which were huge red and yellow stones; but the hand itself was so black that its effect with the jewels and lace was quite singular.

Last, but not least, the Baron was very elegant with powdered hair; but he was unaccustomed to his queue, which continually caught in his collar. He wore a new black coat, and old nankeen trousers over which dangled some ancient trinkets made of American shells.

The other men were dressed in much the same

taste. Dubourg was astonished at the bearing of all these noble personages, and said to himself, "Confound me, if the landlady had not told me about the family of the Marquise de Versac, I should believe I had fallen in with a madame who sells old clothes, and some counts and lords of Empty Pocket Street!"

The conversation did not languish by any means. Everyone talked, laughed and gossiped. Everyone showed the greatest consideration for the Baron Potoski. The Marquise overwhelmed him with courtesies. The old Baroness invited him immediately to visit her on her estates, the Countess looked at him smilingly, and Madame Grandcourt launched some glances in his direction which were quite unequivocal. The men applauded everything he said. Dubourg could not fail to be affected by such marked attention, for men of the utmost experience and finesse will be flattered by what appeals to their self-conceit.

Presently punch, liquors and cakes were brought in. The assembled company fell upon the refreshments immediately. The old Baroness drank like a Swiss grenadier, the Viscountess burrowed among the cakes, and the languishing Grandcourt swallowed two glasses of punch in succession and cried out that it was not strong enough.

Dubourg imitated his neighbors. He took punch and complimented Madame de Versac on the gayety of her circle.

"Oh, we are unconventional," replied the Marquise. "Among people who know each other, is it worth while to keep up burdensome formalities?"

"Indeed, you are right; I love that," replied Dubourg. The punch had begun to excite him a little, and he was ready for anything. "Etiquette is a burden which it is better to lay aside before the door of people of esprit."

"Ah, Monsieur de Potoski, you speak like Barême!" cried the old Baroness, refilling her glass with punch. "You are a palatine of the old school."

"Not so very old, madame."

"But of the best at least," said Madame de Versac, touching Dubourg lightly with her foot. The Polish baron turned, and proceeded to glance at her with extreme tenderness; he then slipped his hand gently behind the Marquise and ventured to pinch her a little, quite according to what he considered the demands of good form. She allowed herself to be pinched without paying the slightest attention to it, and Dubourg was delighted with the refinement of her manner.

"As for me, I like to talk foolishness," said the young Viscountess, who had dared risk a few remarks since the punch and cakes appeared. "I get awful tired of folks bein' solemn all the time."

The vulgarity of the Viscountess' speech brought a slight expression of scorn to Dubourg's

face. Madame de Versac observed it, and hastened to whisper in his ear, "She is a German and has a very broad accent."

"Well, aren't you going to do anything this evening, Madame la Marquise?" asked the Chevalier, pulling down his sleeves to make them longer.

"Truly, my dear," said the Baroness. "Why can't we have a little game?"

"Oh, yes, let us do something!" exclaimed Madame de Grandcourt, rolling her great languishing eyes; "I always want to be doing something."

"Perhaps Monsieur de Potoski does not play," said the Marquise, turning to Dubourg.

"Pardon me, madame! Oh, yes; I shall enjoy playing."

"In that case I will gladly make up the parties. You really wish to play, Baron?"

"With great pleasure!" cried Dubourg. He was enchanted that he could at last withdraw his arm from Madame de Versac's waist, where it threatened to go to sleep. The parties for cards were immediately formed. The Chevalier proposed a little game of creps for the ladies. Dubourg said to himself that in fine society ladies seemed quite different in taste from those of the middle class. Perhaps Madame la Marquise was fond of biribi also.

Monsieur de Potoski was placed at a table with the Count, who, in spite of the length of his frills,

was exceedingly skilful in winning at cards. The game soon became animated. A tall, thin gentleman sitting near Dubourg lost several rolls of twenty-five louis, which were placed upon the table without being undone; and these passed quickly into the pockets of the Count. The thin gentleman, who from his costume might have been a poor lawyer, did not seem to notice his loss.

"These are men who know how to play," reflected Dubourg, — "who play nobly." Not wishing to be behind his companion in the frayed coat, he doubled his bet, and this also passed presently into the hands with frills. The punch went about briskly, for to please Madame de Grandcourt they had made it stronger. Heads became lighter, spirits gayer, and the play was very daring.

Madame de Versac came and seated herself near Dubourg.

"I shall bring success to Monsieur de Potoski," she exclaimed, smiling at him, and showing a set of teeth that would have done credit to a wild boar.

"I wish you could change my luck, madame," exclaimed Dubourg, who had already lost more than a thousand francs, and would gladly win them back. Madame la Marquise responded merely by putting her foot tenderly on his. Each time that Dubourg lost she pressed a little harder, and tried to make him forget his loss by

whispering sweet speeches to him; but Dubourg no longer listened to her.

"I hope to see you often, Monsieur Potoski."

"Yes, madame. — Ten louis more this time!"

"I am a good player!" cried the Count. "I take all that comes."

"But, surely," said the Marquise, "the Count will give you revenge, if you lose this evening."

"If I lose," murmured Dubourg. "Well, I should think so! Nearly two thousand francs already. What a hole in my cashbox!"

"You will come to my country house on the banks of the Rhône, my dear Potoski; I hope you will come."

"Yes, Madame la Marquise — yes. — Always the king on the other side. It is very surprising."

"We will wander through my forest."

"Still another loss!"

"We will breathe the freshness of the evening air."

"I am suffocating here!"

"Will you take something?"

"I wish I could take what I have lost!"

"Do you stay long in Lyons?"

"The devil take me! I don't know!"

Dubourg had lost a thousand crowns, and was bored to death with the pressing of madame's foot under the table. He rose abruptly and walked up and down the salon.

Madame de Grandcourt was lying on a lounge

in a corner. A little gentleman with moustache and whiskers sat on a stool beside her — almost at her feet, in fact. Dubourg felt that according to the law of etiquette he had better not observe them too closely.

At a little distance the old Baroness and the young Viscountess played creps with the Chevalier. The faces of the ladies were exceedingly animated. The Baroness kept a glass of punch constantly before her, and her eyes were fixed wildly upon the dice, while she disputed and exclaimed over a ten-sou piece which she was unwilling to lose.

The Viscountess had found her tongue after eating rolls. She chattered freely in a patois which would have opened Dubourg's eyes if he had kept his head. But his wits were gone completely. The loss he had suffered agitated a brain already overheated by punch and liquors.

He strode up and down the salon, looked blindly about and saw nothing; listened to the sweet nothings of the Marquise without hearing a word she said. He passed his hand over his brow as if to calm his thoughts. He wished to go, but he returned constantly to the gaming-table. "I must win back those thousand crowns — I must," he repeated again and again.

He seated himself before the creps table, and called the Count, who was chatting in a distant corner with the man in the shabby coat. They

were constantly betting rolls of louis which nobody saw.

"Monsieur," said Dubourg, "I hope you will not refuse to give me my revenge at this game, where perhaps I shall have better luck."

"With great pleasure!" replied the count with frills.

He hastened to the creps table, which the old Baroness and the Viscountess quitted immediately. Soon they disappeared into another room, as did Madame Grandcourt; but Dubourg was too much occupied with the game to notice that the ladies had gone.

All the men made a circle about the creps party. They gave Dubourg the choice of being punter or banker. He preferred the latter, and Madame la Marquise placed herself next his chair, and took pains always to give him the shaker and gather up the dice Dubourg dropped. He no longer knew what he should do. He threw the shaker and dice on the floor. They proposed to him a game of trente-et-un, and he accepted in hopes of winning at last. At the end of a half-hour there was not a penny in his purse.

Dubourg felt everywhere; he rummaged in his pockets, in his waistcoat. He had nothing left; he had lost all, and the money was not his to lose. He said nothing more, but walked up and down for a few moments, pale and silent, biting his lips, clenching his fists and muttering an oath

from time to time. The candles in the chandelier began to go out. The Count and the Chevalier whispered together and seemed embarrassed. The Marquise sat in a corner. She did not think it a favorable moment to whisper tender nothings to the Baron Potoski or step on his foot.

At last Dubourg rallied from his depression and came to a decision. He looked for his hat, which he had placed upon an easy-chair, and left the salon, slamming the door violently as he went. He crossed the antechamber, where four big fellows were drinking together, only one of whom was in livery. He opened the door on the landing and descended the stairs. He was not more than half-way down when, wishing to put on his hat, he discovered that he had not his own, but a shabby thing without a cord or a lining, which someone had put in place of his beautiful plumed hat.

"Ah, by Heavens, this is too much!" cried Dubourg, remounting the staircase. "Not content with stealing my money, they will steal my hat, too, the villains! Ah, you counts and chevaliers, we'll see about that!"

Dubourg rang with violence. No one answered. He rang again, and beat against the door with his hands and feet. At last it was opened.

"What do you want?" demanded brusquely the footman in livery.

"What do I want? Why, my hat, which your

chevalier of I don't know where has taken in place of this wretched old opera hat."

"There is no hat here."

"What, you rascal! Do you dare to say that?"

"Silence, monsieur; don't make so much noise here in the house; it displeases Madame la Marquise."

"Go to the devil with your Marquise, who lets herself be pinched in the back in order to ruin people! I will go in! I know how to make them give me my hat!"

"You will not get in! Here — here, friends! Here's a fellow who wants to make trouble!"

The other three men ran down. They seized Dubourg by the shoulders. He struggled in vain; he was not so strong as they. They pushed him down the staircase, while Dubourg shouted abuse at them, called them fools and rascals as well as their masters. The four big fellows said nothing, but pushed him into the street and shut the door of the house in his face.

"Ah, the rascals!" cried Dubourg, pulling on his coat, which he had almost lost also in the struggle. "Ah, the villains! What a sweet evening I have had there! Ugh! I'll pick up stones and break the windows. But no: I will call out; the patrol will pass presently."

He waited a few moments in the street, undecided what he should do. But it was very late; the street was deserted. If he stayed there he ran

the risk of being arrested himself. He reflected that he was a stranger in the city, and that he bore a title which did not belong to him. All these reasons counselled him to wait until the next day to try to obtain justice from Madame la Marquise. While waiting he had better find his way back to the hotel.

But how could he present himself to Frederic and to Ménard, after having lost all the money they had entrusted to him? He had no more, and they owed the hotel a large sum.

Dubourg struck himself and beat himself with his fist as he returned through the streets of Lyons. At last he arrived at their hotel, where he stopped and talked soberly to himself in this fashion: "I always end by consoling myself. If I pass the night in the street and beat myself, that will not put a penny in my purse; therefore, I will go to bed, and tomorrow I will find a way out of this."

CHAPTER VIII

Sister Anne Appears

Frederic, on his return to the hotel in the evening, had discovered M. Ménard seated before the remains of a chicken with cresses, with which the former tutor had very agreeably passed the greater part of his evening. Somewhat astonished at not seeing Dubourg, the young count asked M. Ménard what had become of their friend, and received from the latter the amazing information that Monsieur le Baron had gone to spend the evening at one of the grandest houses of the town, the owners of which were noble and wealthy people who had sent their companion a special invitation.

That Dubourg should be invited out in Lyons, where he knew nobody, appeared extremely singular to Frederic, who feared that this entrance into aristocratic circles at one of the finest and most exclusive mansions of the city could only be another of the romantic stories invented by his friend to bewilder and mystify M. Ménard. The young man was, however, very careful not to communicate his suspicions as to the truth of the story to the credulous old tutor, and con-

tented himself with remarking that they would pursue their journey on the morrow.

"His excellency, the Baron, is in no hurry to go," said Ménard. "He likes it very much at Lyons."

"And this morning he was urging me to go on."

"The invitation he received may have changed his plans."

"His excellency, the Baron, may say what he pleases; we will go tomorrow."

Ménard made no reply and went to bed, but reflected that his pupil was rather free with a man like the Baron. Frederic retired also, although he was somewhat disturbed at the absence of Dubourg.

The next day the young count and Ménard met early in the room where they usually took breakfast. But Dubourg did not appear.

"Did he not return last night?" asked Frederic.

"Pardon me, monsieur," said one of the hotel attendants, "his excellency, the Baron, came back about three o'clock this morning. He seemed very tired; he is still in bed."

"How foolish to be up all night when we leave today! But where the devil has he been? Go and tell him that we are waiting for him."

The time passed. The waiter returned with the information that the Baron was ill and could not rise.

"The rascal was drunk yesterday," said Frederic to himself, and, followed by Ménard, who began by rubbing his temples and nose with vinegar as a precautionary measure against infection, he went to Dubourg's chamber.

They found him in bed. He had pulled his nightcap over his eyes, and had tied his handkerchief over it; and he gave to his face such a piteous expression that one would have believed on seeing him that he had suffered and languished for three months in bed.

Ménard paused in the middle of the room, applying to his nose an enormous flask of vinegar, as he said in a low tone to Frederic, —

"My God! how changed he is already!"

"What is the matter, my poor Dubourg?" exclaimed Frederic, approaching the bed and taking the hand of the sick man, who had employed every known means to give himself a fever, or the appearance of one.

"Alas, my dear fellow, I am afraid I am very ill!"

"What has caused your illness?"

"Oh, it is a terrible thing! It is the result of a dreadful adventure, it is the shock I received which has caused me to —"

"First of all we must have a doctor."

"I will go and get one, and an apothecary also," cried Ménard, who felt that he must get a breath of fresh air.

"No, no, dear Monsieur Ménard; I don't like doctors; and we have time enough. Hippocrates himself has said, 'Vita brevis, ars longa, experientia fallax.'"

"Yes, Baron; but later Hippocrates also said—"

"Oh, please let Hippocrates alone!" cried Frederic, who began to read in Dubourg's eyes that he was not so ill as he would like to appear. "And if you don't want a doctor, tell me at least the cause of your illness, and your terrible adventure."

"Yes," said Ménard, taking care to seat himself as far as possible from the bed, and so that he could get the air from the door. "Let me know soon if it is contagious."

Dubourg sat up in bed; he lifted his eyes to Heaven, pulled his nightcap as far as possible over his eyes, emitted some plaintive groans, and at length, in the most mournful tones, began his recital.

"The honorable M. Ménard heard me say yesterday, dear Count, that I had received a letter of invitation from one of the first families of the city. At least that is what my landlady assured me, and certainly without that—"

"Yes, they told me that. Go on, go on; explain yourself," said Frederic, impatient over Dubourg's roundabout way of beginning his story.

"Softly, dear Frederic; I am not in a state to

hurry so. I went away in a carriage last evening, after having dressed with a great deal of care."

"Yes; I saw that you had taken one of my coats."

"You know well that I lost my wardrobe in my coach."

"Yes, after—"

"I don't know by what fatality it happened that exactly in the pocket of your coat I had the pocketbook which contained all our fortune."

"Ah, that sounds bad," said Frederic, under his breath; while Ménard, much disturbed, began to draw his chair nearer. "Well, well! Go on!"

"Oh, yes, monsieur! Yes, Baron!"

"Well—well, dear, dear friends—when I left this brilliant circle, where I had been so beautifully entertained, and where I had stayed a little too late, indeed, I found my carriage gone. I was alone in a street which I did not know. All at once four robbers sprang upon me. Alas! I had no arms. I defended myself like a lion, but it was in vain. They beat me, they pushed me, and threw me to the earth; and, what is worse, they robbed me of all that I had upon me!"

"O my God! and you had our money!" cried Ménard.

"I had it all!"

"And your own fifteen thousand francs!"

"All, all, I tell you! There is nothing left except what you have with you. They have taken

even my superb hat, of which the cord alone cost sixty francs."

"What a catastrophe! And what shall we do now?" asked Ménard, who was filled with anguish to realize that, having lived as seigneurs, they might find themselves reduced to expedients.

Frederic said nothing. He suspected Dubourg's story. His friend saw this, and endeavored to convince him by renewed exclamations of the most tragic sort.

"What a catastrophe! To be attacked, to be robbed! Such horrors are only for me."

"Indeed, dear Baron, it seems that you are not fortunate," remarked Ménard, remembering the loss of the coach.

"And with whom did you pass the evening?" asked Frederic.

"With Madame the Marquise de Versac."

"With Madame de Versac! But that is very singular. I was yesterday at her country house."

"You have seen her? What! do you know her?" cried Dubourg, in a voice which was no longer that of a sick man.

"Madame de Versac visited my father occasionally while she was in Paris last year. During the summer she lives in her country house. Yesterday I saw her, I tell you. She reproved me very amiably because I had not visited in the country with her, and I am sure she has not returned to the city."

"O my God! what are you telling me? How old is this marquise?"

"She is about twenty-eight. Her city house is on Bellecour Square."

"Oh, thousand cigars! It was a contraband marquise! Triple fool that I was, not to see through it!"

Dubourg rose. He sprang from his bed, and rolling himself on his blankets, tore off his night-cap and threw it on the floor.

"The Baron is delirious!" Ménard exclaimed. "I will run for an apothecary."

The tutor hurried away. Frederic was not vexed at that, for it gave him an opportunity to find out the real truth from Dubourg; but the Baron was not in the humor for explanations, and for some moments he could not restrain himself. He was furious at the so-called counts and chevaliers.

He dressed in haste, swearing that he would find his baron with the trinkets, his shabby chevalier and his count with the frills. Then he swore also that he would break the last tooth in the Baroness' head, that he would box the Viscountess' ears and flog the Marquise.

At last Frederic made himself heard.

"Did you gamble yesterday, you unlucky dog? And is that where our money has gone?"

"Ah, dear friend, beat me, kill me! I know that I am simply a beast. But really, you would

have done the same in my place. How could she dare to use a respectable name so! I went in all confidence. I dreamed of making a fortunate marriage. All about me I heard people talking of nothing but 'my estates,' 'my château,' 'my servants,' 'my millions,' as I would say 'my coat' and 'my hat'; and they overwhelmed me with attentions — and liquors! I should have suspected that it was all wrong, but how could I? You see I am not accustomed to grand society, to fine people. When the Marquise pressed my foot, I supposed that was a custom of the nobility; and when another woman used bad grammar, I could not tell that it was not a German accent. They gambled. I confess that I love play, and they stole all I had, even to my hat. But it shall not end that way!"

"Where are you going?" said Frederic, trying to hold Dubourg, who seized his opera hat to go out.

"Let me go! let me go! I want to find those scoundrels, and perhaps — Wait for me here."

Dubourg opened the door just as Ménard entered with a young apothecary, whose hands were full of calming potions. Dubourg brushed hastily passed Ménard, who tried to stop him, and rushed down the stairs four steps at a time. The tutor fell against the apothecary, and he tumbled flat with all his potions.

"Run after him! catch him!" cried Ménard, for he believed that Dubourg was burning with

fever. Frederic could hardly persuade him to send away the apothecary, assuring him that the Baron was much better.

Dubourg hastened to the house of his false marquise, having fortunately kept the number. He must go on foot now, and could no longer give himself the airs of a grand seigneur. The lorgnette was not at all appropriate with the old opera hat, which did not more than half cover Dubourg's head. But at that moment he was not thinking of his appearance, for he was absorbed wholly in the thought of recovering his money.

He soon reached the house where he had been the evening before. He recognized it easily, and as he had made his plans during the night he entered the passage boldly, finding the door open. He mounted the stairs, listened, looked about him and heard nothing. He rang the bell of the apartment, from which he had been so rudely sent away the night before, but no one answered. He rang several times with more violence. Finally the bell wire broke in his hand, but no one opened the door.

"Open, cheats, rascals," cried Dubourg, "or I will bring the police!" and he shook the door. An old woman appeared on the landing of the next story and asked why he made such a noise.

"I want to speak to the people who live in this apartment," replied Dubourg.

"Oh, there is no one living there, monsieur. I rented it furnished to a woman who went away before daylight."

Dubourg was petrified. He saw that there was no more hope of getting his money back. He returned slowly and sorrowfully to the hotel, and met Frederic and Ménard with an air of consternation.

"Well, what about the thieves?" asked Frederic.

"Oh, my friend, they have escaped already."

"I was sure of it."

"At least, Baron, you have left word with the police."

"Monsieur Ménard, I have done everything that can be done; but I am afraid we must say farewell to our money."

"And what are we to do now?"

"That is what we must think of. How much money have you, Monsieur Ménard?"

"Two louis; not more."

"And you, Frederic?"

"I have about ten."

"That is not even enough to pay our landlord, whom we must owe about a hundred crowns."

"What! Is that not paid?"

"Do you suppose they would ask people like us to pay in advance?"

"And such a bill!"

"Well, we must live; and what does it matter

whether it is a hundred francs or a hundred crowns, if we can't pay?"

"But we can't leave the hotel without paying our bill, and we cannot travel farther without money."

"It is rather a difficult problem," said Ménard.

"I only see one thing to do," said Dubourg, "and that is to write to the Count of Montreville for money. He certainly will not leave his son in embarrassment."

"Ask money of the Count! And it is not three months since we left Paris!" sighed Ménard. "If the Baron would write to his steward of Rava or Krapach, how would that be?"

"Ah, I will write gladly, but it is so far. It will take at least two months to get a reply, because at this time the avalanches are a great hindrance to the couriers."

"In summer, Baron?"

"Certainly; it is in summer that the snows melt. Good Lord, if it were winter you could skate half the way. We could not wait all that time in this hotel. We must have money immediately."

"Dear Ménard," said Frederic, "it is absolutely necessary to write to my father."

"I shall tell him the misfortune that has come to his excellency, the Baron."

"No, no! You are the one to whom he confided the funds. It is you who have been robbed.

It is of no use to mention me. Imagine that you were out last night and were robbed."

"Go on, dear Ménard; write my father a very pathetic letter."

"The devil! It is very difficult."

"I will dictate one to you, if you wish."

Ménard took the pen and Dubourg dictated to him the following letter:—

Monsieur le Comte,—I have the honor to inform you of our happy arrival at Lyons, and also of the misfortune we have experienced. As I returned to the hotel this evening, I was attacked by thieves and robbed of all we possess. This has placed us in a very embarrassing position, from which we pray you to relieve us as soon as possible. Let me add that your son bears himself like Æsculapius, and the journey seems to have been of great benefit to him. He charges me to present to you his most sincere respects.

Ménard signed this letter, and Dubourg wished Frederic to add to it some very tender words. Frederic, however, had never lied to his father, and he preferred to say nothing rather than make any effort to impose upon his good faith.

The letter was consigned to the post, and they must await his reply. Fortunately, their landlord did not seem in the least troubled. They had a carriage and horses, which would at the worst be more than sufficient to pay him. That reassured Frederic, but he nevertheless begged his companions to make their table less expensive. Dubourg did not think this would be wise; he was

certain it would arouse the suspicions of their host, and Ménard agreed with the Baron.

Frederic resumed his walks and meditations, but Dubourg did not return to his promenades with Ménard. After he had displayed his elegant figure in the streets of Lyons and played the palatine, he did not care to show himself in his old opera hat, and with a long face. He felt as if everyone would suspect that he had not a penny. There are many people who owe their assurance and their self-confidence to the gold which they have in their pockets, and this alone gives them their aplomb.

Dubourg passed his days in philosophizing with Ménard, who was not a philosopher, but who listened with respect to the Baron, and considered him very wise. He was not, however, so delighted as formerly to be the Baron's travelling companion, because when he recalled their adventures since the Baron threw them into a ditch in the collision with his coach, he saw that the Baron carried with him a certain evil destiny, of which they had already experienced the effect.

At the end of ten days they received an answer from the Count. It was addressed to M. Ménard, but it was Frederic who tremblingly broke the seal.

"Look, first, and see what he has sent," said Dubourg.

They found an order for six thousand francs upon a Lyons banker.

"Good!" said Dubourg. "Now we have something with which to support the reproaches of a father. See what he says."

Monsieur de Montreville wrote to Monsieur Ménard only these words: —

I do not believe in the least the story of the robbers which you have told me. But I prefer to pardon my son's first folly. I hope, however, that it will make him wiser. I send you more money, but do not count upon such indulgence again.

"He did not believe us," said Frederic.

"I am afraid that he is angry," remarked Ménard.

"Never mind; he will get over it. We will travel henceforth like three little painted loves. We will be wise, we will be settled, philosophic; but that need not prevent our being well fed, for good nourishment is necessary to health — is it not, M. Ménard?"

"Credo equidem, Baron."

"But no more luxury, no more display. I will return to my incognito."

"What, Baron!"

"Yes, Monsieur Ménard; besides, with six thousand francs we could not play the fine gentleman very long — I mean keep our rank."

"But, Baron, when you have received a reply from Rava and Krapach — "

"Ah, that will be different; but I am afraid that we may have to wait a long time. As to the funds, I think we had better put them in charge

of Frederic. He is more calm, has more presence of mind. Those are the qualities a cashier needs."

"It is a pity!" murmured Ménard under his breath. "We lived so nobly when the Baron paid!"

When all their arrangements had been completed they settled their account at the hotel. For the three weeks they had lived at the hotel they paid eight hundred and fifty francs, which made quite a hole in the Count's enclosure; but during this time they had lived like gentlemen. Dubourg regretted deeply that he could not keep up the same magnificent style, Ménard sighed over the fine dinners he had eaten, and Frederic said softly to Dubourg, —

"Dear friend, if we go so fast we cannot go so far."

They sold the Count's horses, and arranged with a driver to take them out of Lyons.

"The two stops we have made have cost you pretty dear, Baron," said Ménard; "a coach and fifty thousand francs the first time, and fifteen thousand the second. You couldn't travel very long at that rate."

"But now I am relieved of all worry, Monsieur Ménard. I defy anyone to rob me. Socrates always found his house large enough to receive his friends; as for me, I find my purse full enough when Frederic pays for me."

M. Ménard could say nothing in reply. The comparison did not seem to him very happy.

Instead of taking the route to Turin, Frederic decided to go to Grenoble. He wished to visit this city and its surroundings, and longed especially to see the Chartreuse, the savage aspect of which fills the traveller with astonishment and even fear. Dubourg was in no hurry to reach Italy, and did not care in which direction he went. Indeed, since his last escapade, he did not permit himself to advise his friends. As to Ménard, he was always submissive to the wishes of Frederic; but the very name of the Chartreuse made him tremble. He feared that his pupil might wish to enter some hermitage, and he had no taste for a frugal and retired life.

Along the banks of the Isère the country becomes more picturesque, more mountainous and imposing. Clumps of wood vary the monotony of the prairies; the brooks, after having watered the plains, break into cascades and waterfalls among the mountainous rocks. The noisy neighborhoods of Paris are far away, and also the delicious scenery and views along the banks of the Rhône. The picture has become more serious, more majestic perhaps. It inspires the soul to sweet reverie, and transports the observer far from the city, of which you no longer hear the tumult.

"How much this country pleases me!" said Frederic. "I find in it a subtle charm which

appeals to my heart as well as to my eyes. How sweet it is to wander beneath these shades!"

"To dream of Madame Dernange! Is it not so?"

"Oh, no, Dubourg. I assure you it is a long time since she has been in my thoughts. I have forgotten her and all the coquettes that I knew in Paris."

"Well, then, whom are you dreaming of in these long solitary walks?"

"Alas! I cannot tell. I dream of a being I do not know; of a sweet woman, tender, loving, but especially faithful."

"And do you look for her on the banks of the brooks?"

"I am not seeking her. I believe I shall meet her unexpectedly; that chance will bring her to me."

"If this chance should come only once in thirty years, you will both of you be a little mature before it happens."

"Ah, Dubourg, you make me very impatient. You have no idea of love."

"My friend, it is only a doll, which each one dresses according to his fashion. Is it not so, Monsieur Ménard?"

"Baron, I cannot answer ad rem."

They arrived at Grenoble, where they sent away the postilion. Their arrangements here were quite different from those at Lyons; but, although

the hotel was less luxurious, the table was excellent. The poultry was abundant, and the wines of fine vintage. M. Ménard and Dubourg were well content.

The day of their arrival Frederic and his two companions set forth on a little tour to visit the Chartreuse. Dubourg no longer played the fine gentleman, and enjoyed being with his friend rather than with M. Ménard. The tutor decided to accompany them, although he was not a good walker, Frederic preferring to make the journey on foot, for the sake of enjoying the landscape.

The travellers arrived at the Chartreuse after a journey of nearly half a day, over mountains covered with pines, through fertile valleys, prairies and rich pastures. The route through Fourvoyerie follows a road cut in the rock, skirting on the left a torrent; while on the right a rock rears itself sixty feet into the air. A new sentiment is experienced at the aspect of this savage spectacle, and one is lost in a mingling of admiration and terror. One stops to look closely at the rock of the Needle, which is near the gate of the Grande-Chartreuse.

Frederic wondered, Dubourg looked and Ménard sighed; but the hospitable reception which the travellers received at the Chartreuse reanimated the spirits of the poor tutor. He confessed that this country offered admirable views; but he felt, nevertheless, that he preferred his little apartment

on the fourth story Rue Bétisy, to the most picturesque cell of the Chartreuse, in which he would always be hungry.

It is not possible for everyone to enjoy the beauties of nature, and it was with infinite pleasure that Ménard turned his back upon Chartreuse to return to Grenoble, although Frederic proposed to him to sleep at the monastery, so as not to be too wearied by the journey. Ménard assured him he was not tired, that the five leagues did not frighten him in the least; so they took the road again after dinner.

The sun was almost setting, and our travellers were still four leagues from Grenoble, because Frederic paused every little while to call his friend's attention to a valley, a mill or a landscape. Each time Frederic stopped Ménard sat down upon the grass, and they had a great deal of trouble to put him on his feet again. The good man was not much of a walker; but he recalled his courage, and took the liberty of leaning upon the arm of his excellency the Baron, who was the best fellow in the world when he was not giving himself the airs of a palatine. The sound of rustic music attracted Frederic's attention.

"Come on!" he cried; "let us go down on this side. I see some villagers dancing below; let us enjoy the picture of their pleasure."

"Come on!" cried Dubourg; "there must be some pretty girls down there."

"Come on!" added Ménard; "we will rest and refresh ourselves."

The travellers descended a hill and were soon in a valley bordered by oaks and firs. They found there a great crowd of people, who had come from a village at the other side of the valley. It was the festival of the neighborhood, which the peasants celebrated by enthusiastic dancing. A bagpipe and tambourine formed the entire orchestra, but it was enough to set them jumping. Joy shone in all the faces. The girls wore their choicest ornaments, and the picturesque costume of the village women of this district in itself made them very attractive.

Ménard seated himself at a table and asked for refreshments. Dubourg mingled with the dancers, saying sweet things to the prettiest peasant girls. Frederic watched the picture presented for some time, then wandered away from the crowd and the dance, and followed the banks of a brook which wound into a clump of willows, at the entrance of a thick wood.

He went so far that the rustic music of the bagpipes sounded faintly in his ears. He was about to rejoin his companions, when, turning his head, he saw, a few steps from him, a young girl sitting upon the brookside. Her eyes were turned towards the valley with an expression of enchanting sweetness. She smiled at the dance, which she looked at from afar; but there was a melancholy in

her smile which seemed habitual. The young girl was about sixteen years old. Her dress indicated poverty, but her grace and sweetness forbade any suggestion of the misery associated with it. Beautiful golden hair clustered in ringlets about her lovely forehead. It was a brow which promised candor and strength. Her features were fine and delicate, her mouth was gentle and gracious ; and her eyes, of a tender blue, had in them a touching expression of sweetness and sensitive feeling which appeared deepened by the pallor of her cheeks.

Frederic paused. He looked at the young girl. He could not take his eyes from her. Why is she alone upon the banks of the brook while her companions are rejoicing in pleasure and the dance, and why does her face wear such a sorrowful expression? Frederic had only just seen her, but already he was deeply interested in her. He was anxious to know everything which concerned her, and to share in his own heart the sorrows which distressed her.

At that moment several young couples from the village passed near, on their way to the dance. Frederic addressed some of the girls, pointing to the little figure seated on the bank.

"Who is that sweet child?" he asked, "and why does she not join in your pleasure?"

The villagers stopped, and glanced at the young girl with pity and evident sympathy; then turning to Frederic they said, —

"Oh, monsieur, the poor little thing can't dance. It is Sister Anne."

Frederic was astonished, and waited for an explanation; but the young people went on to the dance, merely repeating in a sorrowful tone, "It is Sister Anne."

CHAPTER IX

What is She Doing There? The Village Dance

The villagers had departed, but Frederic remained immersed in thought under the willows, through which the last rays of the setting sun feebly penetrated. He was still looking at the little girl who did not see him, because, since there were no longer any dancers to look at, she sat with bowed head and saw only the stream which sparkled at her feet. What meant the village girls by those words: "It is Sister Anne. Poor little thing! she cannot dance?"

The tone of pity in which the words were uttered had made a deep impression upon Frederic. What sorrows, what cause, could prevent this pretty girl from participating in the amusements and pleasures natural to her age? Although a gentle melancholy subdued her charming features, she did not seem disturbed by a recent sorrow; on the contrary, she was calm and tranquil, she smiled at the brook that murmured before her, and surely her soul was as pure as the water that reflected her image.

A mystery evidently shadowed the young girl's

destiny, and Frederic yearned to pierce its depths. He could no longer be indifferent to anything which concerned Sister Anne.

He advanced softly. He was very near her, and she had not lifted her eyes.

"And why," exclaimed Frederic, "why don't you join your companions? They are dancing only a little way from you, — why do you stay here in this lonely place?"

At the sound of Frederic's voice the young girl turned her head and started with fright, but she was immediately reassured by the gentle tone in which he spoke to her. She was no longer alarmed, but rose and left the bank of the stream. "Have you had some great misfortune, some sorrow? Surely you are too young to know much of trouble. Ah, if I could help you in any way it would make me very happy."

The young girl cast upon Frederic a glance of mingled sorrow and gratitude. She fixed her beautiful eyes upon his for a moment, then making him a graceful little courtesy she prepared to withdraw. He took her hand gently, however, and detained her. She was astonished, half frightened again, and withdrew her hand from that of the young man, who had pressed it warmly.

"You are going," said Frederic; "you fly, and without answering me, without deigning to speak to me."

The eyes of the young girl became doubly

expressive; a sentiment of indescribable sorrow animated them. Presently the tears filled them, and ran down her pale, almost colorless cheeks.

"Good God! you are crying! There must be a cause for that!" cried Frederic, seizing anew the poor child's hand. She made a sign as if to indicate that it was not his fault. A little smile pierced through her tears, but she forcibly disengaged her hand and ran into the darkness of the thick woods. She was as light as a fawn, and disappeared immediately from Frederic's eyes.

He started after her for a few steps, but it was already dark, and he could not see which way she had gone. He returned to the borders of the brook and paused in the spot where she had been sitting.

Frederic could not have explained what had happened to him, but he felt a sentiment for this strange young girl more vivid, more tender, and far sweeter than anything he had previously experienced.

As she disappeared from view his heart beat tumultuously. It seemed to him that she was already very dear to him, that she was not a stranger.

What grace, what charm, she possessed! But why this silence and sadness? They called her Sister Anne. What did they mean by the title? Did she belong to some religious order? But no, that could not be possible; for her dress did not

indicate anything of that sort, and it was evident that she went freely through the country. Still there was something mysterious about her.

"Charming girl! Oh, I will know everything about you, all that concerns you," murmured Frederic, looking eagerly toward the wood where she had disappeared. "I will see you again; I will comfort you in your sorrow. I know that I love you already. Oh, I love you, not like those coquettes who have deceived me, but as you ought to be loved! I read only candor and innocence in your eyes. Ah, if you would love me sometime I should be very happy."

Night had fallen, and he must seek his companions. Frederic left regretfully the willows where he had seen Sister Anne, but as he returned to the valley he said to himself repeatedly, —

"I shall see her again; I must see her again. I shall not speak of her to Dubourg. He would only mock at me. He believes that all women are the same. He has no idea of real love. Poor little thing! I wonder why you could not dance with the other girls."

The dancers were very gay, the villagers giving themselves up joyously to the pleasure. Their faces reflected the frolic and happiness of the moment. The songs of the drinkers mingled with the notes of the tambourine and the bagpipes. The young men pressed the hands of their partners in the dance, the young girls smiled

upon their lovers, the mothers upon their babies, and the old men upon their bottles. Each one smiled at what he loved, as if to give thanks for the happiness love brought him.

Ménard, who was seated between two intrepid drinkers, listened tranquilly to the history of the country while he ate a salad. He gossiped freely with his neighbors, for in the village, pride was forgotten and distinction of rank disappeared. Ménard would never, under any circumstances, allow pride to interfere with his appetite.

Dubourg, forgetting his titles of nobility, joined eagerly in the dance. His partner was a pretty brunette, with sparkling eyes, a turned-up nose and a very fine figure. The country girl was not in the least frightened at dancing with the fine gentleman.

She jumped higher than ever, and continually cried to her partner, "Go on! go on! You're too slow!"

Dubourg danced in the Paris fashion, with the short, slow steps which the drawing-room circle pronounced graceful and perfect. But the villagers thought this was no better than walking about. The young girl wished her cavalier to have more spirit.

"Can't you dance any better than that? What do you call that dance, anyway? Oh, jump a little, or I'll get another partner!"

Dubourg did not wish her to take another

partner, so he made a magnetic battery of his arms and legs, and sparkled all over with movement and energy.

Ménard looked on from his table, saw how Dubourg was dancing, and said to his neighbors,—

"See there! His excellency the Baron is dancing a polonaise with those young girls. Look, friends! That is the way they dance in Cracovia and on the Krapach Mountains. How noble that is! how graceful! What pretty steps he takes per fas et nefas!"

Ménard's companions opened their eyes wide and had no idea what he meant. But the brunette was satisfied with Dubourg; and he, seeing she was in an excellent humor, ventured to take a kiss. She responded unexpectedly with a vigorous box on the ears, for the village maidens of the neighborhood of Grenoble are not like the Gotons in the neighborhood of Paris.

Frederic was looking on at the dance, but he saw nothing of the animated tableau which passed before his eyes. His thoughts were still in the solitary wood, and he was gazing at the young girl seated on the border of the brook.

Dubourg approached him. He had quitted his partner because he saw that he would get nothing from her but laughter, jumping and noise; and the blow she gave him in exchange for his slight liberties had calmed his ardor for the dance.

"Where have you been?" said he to Frederic. "You left us in the midst of the fun."

"I have been taking a little walk."

"What an insatiable walker you are! But I believe it is time we walked towards Grenoble — is it not? We are nearly four leagues from there."

They rejoined Ménard, and he complimented Dubourg upon his manner of dancing. Frederic asked what was the shortest route, and a young villager offered his services as guide for a part of the way. Ménard did not seem able to walk four leagues, and even Dubourg was dismayed at the length of the route before them. The villager offered his carthorse, on condition that they should not go faster than a walk. The horse was accepted gratefully by Dubourg and Ménard, and the tutor mounted and held on tight behind the Baron. Frederic was to walk ahead with the young villager. They set forth.

The landscape floated in fairy moonlight. The night was superb. On the left of the travellers huge forests of firs were piled in majestic shadow. There was no sound save that of the blacksmith's hammer, which seemed to intensify the silence of the night. When they passed near a forge a sudden brilliance replaced for a moment the bluish radiance of the moon, and cast the glint of fire into the soft stillness of the night. The voices of the workers were heard, mingled with the blows of a hammer. Dubourg said to Ménard,—

"Do you hear the Cyclops working at Jupiter's forge?"

And Ménard replied,—

"I wouldn't trust myself alone at night with those fellows for all the gold of Peru."

He gave a little kick to their charger as he spoke, but it went no faster for the blow. Dubourg and the tutor were a little in the rear because the carthorse could make but slow progress over the road, which was very rough and stony. Frederic went on ahead with the guide. He was only a little fellow of twelve years, frank and innocent, like almost all the mountaineers.

"What is the village we have just left?" asked Frederic.

"It is Vizille, monsieur. It is the prettiest village near Grenoble."

"Do you live there?"

"Yes, monsieur; I was born there."

"And do you know—"

Before completing the sentence Frederic turned to see if his companions could hear what was said, but they were fully fifty feet behind. Dubourg was talking of Brittany, and describing to Ménard some points in the manner of life there. Frederic saw that he could chat with his guide with no fear of being overheard.

"Do you know in the village a young girl who is called Sister Anne?"

"Sister Anne? Oh, yes, monsieur; of course I

know her. She does not live exactly in the village, but her cottage is not far from there. Poor Sister Anne! Who doesn't know her in our country?"

"Ah! You are sorry for her too? What is there so unfortunate about this girl?"

"I think she is to be pitied; she has such a sad story."

"You know it?"

"Yes, monsieur. My mother has told me about it many times. Everybody in our country knows it."

"Tell me the story. Tell me all you know about Sister Anne. Speak, my boy, and be sure you forget nothing."

As he said this Frederic slipped a coin into the child's hand. He was surprised at being paid for such a simple thing as telling a story, and began his recital with much spirit. Frederic pressed closer to him, and lost not a single word.

CHAPTER X

The Story of Sister Anne

"Sister Anne, monsieur, is the daughter of a lady who was called Clotilda, and who was, so they say, very charming and very pretty. This Clotilda was born of very rich parents, and was not brought up like a simple country girl; she was very talented and possessed many accomplishments; but for all that, she came with her husband to live in our little village among plain hard-working people.

"People said that her marriage was a love match, and that the beautiful Clotilda had preferred life in a cottage with the man she loved rather than to dwell in a fine mansion as the wife of another and a wealthier man.

"However that may be, Clotilda and her husband lived very harmoniously in our village for a long time, and the good God sent them children to complete their happiness; first, a little daughter, Anne, who was from the first quite as pretty as her mother. Perhaps you have seen her, monsieur.

"Four years afterwards they had another child. This was a boy. The parents were happy over

it, and little Anne never left her brother for a moment. Soon these poor people were overwhelmed with misfortunes. A storm devastated their fields and they lost their entire harvest; then poor Clotilda fell ill; and her husband could think of nothing to do in order to save his wife and children from dying of starvation, but to enlist as a substitute. He sold himself, gave all the money to his wife, and left her, saying, 'Take care of our poor children.'

"The anguish of her husband's departure deprived Clotilda of her remaining strength, and she was for a long while unable to do anything for her little household. During this time little Anne took the entire care of her baby brother, who loved her with all his heart. Her mother often said to her, —

"'Take good care of your brother. Alas! perhaps there will very soon be no one else to watch over him.'

"A year rolled by. At first Clotilda's husband wrote often, then suddenly his letters ceased. There had been a battle — at that time there were many battles, and poor Clotilda's husband was among the slain. They received the news in the neighborhood, but no one had the courage to tell the poor woman, and she looked for a letter from her husband and expected his return when he had long been dead.

"She went every day to the top of a high

mountain, from which she could see for miles around the village. She hoped thus to catch the first glimpse of her husband. Often she passed entire days sitting under a tree, her eyes fixed upon the road where she had seen her husband for the last time. When the villagers saw Clotilda there they tried to console her; they spoke to her of her children, but she said sorrowfully, 'Anne is with her brother; she never leaves him; she will be a second mother to him.'

"The young girl was not yet seven years old, but she surprised everyone by her willingness and her tender care for her brother. The poor little fellow saw no one but his sister the greater part of the day, but he lacked for nothing. His sister Anne rocked him, dressed him, petted him, and tried to foresee his slightest wishes. The name of 'Sister Anne' was the first that the baby lisped, and soon everyone in the village called her that. All spoke of her as a model of sisterly love and kindness, and she is still called 'Sister Anne.'

"One day Clotilda had gone out as usual to take her accustomed watch, and Sister Anne was alone in the cottage with her brother. At the hour when the mother returned, as a rule, she did not come. The little boy continued to play with his sister; but she was disturbed, and looked constantly down the road, saying, 'Where is mamma? Why doesn't mamma come?'

"The night fell, and Clotilda was not at home.

If Anne had been alone she would have run to the village, through the fields and woods, to find her mother; but how could she leave her brother? That was impossible for her. He was a treasure confided to her, and she must not leave him for an instant.

"The poor child decided to put her brother to bed, for he was only three years old, and was sleepy and tired. She would watch beside him until her mother came; and when would that be? The time rolled on; each moment doubled the child's anguish. Her bosom heaved, great tears fell from her eyes, and she sobbed again and again, 'Where is mamma? Where is mamma? O God! has she abandoned us?'

"As if to increase her terrors, a frightful storm broke over the village. The thunder rolled in great peals. Sister Anne was dreadfully frightened. She buried her head in the covers of her little brother's bed, and called on her mother for help.

"All at once the lightning struck with a terrific noise, which resounded through all the village. Sister Anne was stunned by the violence of the shock, and for some time dared not open her eyes. When she looked about her a thick smoke enveloped the cottage. The poor little thing tried in vain to discover what was the cause of the cloud that surrounded her. Each moment the smoke increased. Anne ran to the window. The flames covered it from without, and closed the

passage for her. Alas! the lightning had struck the roof of the cottage; it had taken fire, and on every side the poor children were walled in by the flames.

"The young girl thought only of her brother. She ran to his cradle, took him in her arms, and looked on all sides, shrieking terribly. But, alas! the danger increased. She lost her strength; the smoke strangled her; she could call no more; she was utterly exhausted.

"You can easily imagine, monsieur, that everybody in the village ran to the cottage. It was no longer possible to save the house, but the children could be rescued. They succeeded at last, after many perils, in entering the chamber of Sister Anne. They found her hidden with her brother under her mother's bed, the little fellow pressed close to her breast, determined to save him from death; but, alas! it was useless, the child was already dead. Sister Anne had only fainted, and they succeeded in recalling her to life. But imagine, monsieur, the sorrow and astonishment of everyone when it was found that the terrible experience she had passed through had deprived her of speech; she opened her lips and only confused cries issued from them. Since that day the poor child has been unable to utter a word."

"Great God!" exclaimed Frederic. "Poor girl! Is that the cause of that strange melancholy which is seen in her charming face?"

"Yes, monsieur," continued the young guide. "Sister Anne is dumb. All that has been done to restore her speech has been useless. The physicians said that the despair of seeing her brother die without being able to save him deprived her of all power of expression, and that perhaps a similar shock would restore speech to her. The poor little thing has kept a heart sensitive enough to feel everything, and she has not forgotten any of her sufferings. She has wept during all these years for her mother and her brother. Poor Clotilda had yielded to her grief, and they found her lifeless at the foot of the tree on top of the mountain, where she was accustomed to watch for her husband, on the same night that was so fatal to her children.

"When the cottage was destroyed by lightning Anne was deprived of her last refuge, but the village people outdid one another in caring for the young girl. A good woman named Marguerite, who lives in a cottage in the wood adjoining the village, took Anne home with her and adopted her as her daughter.

"Marguerite was poor also, but, with the united help of the richest of the villagers, Anne was given a cow and some goats.

"For several years she was unable to devote herself to any work. She passed her days seated on the banks of the brook, or in the depths of the wood. She could not listen to anything that was

said to her, and could only weep for her parents and her brother. Time has calmed her grief a little, and she is more quiet, more resigned. She has proved herself very grateful for everything that was done for her. She works hard at all the country tasks, and shows the most tender regard for poor Marguerite, who is now so old that she does not go out of her cottage.

"Sister Anne is now just as sweet, sensitive and good as she has always been. She even smiles sometimes, but her smile is always full of sadness. At sight of a little boy as old as her brother on that fearful night Anne is excited, distressed, and tears spring to her eyes. If you have seen her, monsieur, ah, you know how pretty she is. She is sixteen now. If she does not speak, she understands everything. Her gestures are full of expression, and her eyes fairly talk. Oh, we understand her very easily. In spite of that, it is a great pity that she cannot talk, for the village women say that it would do her so much good."

"Poor little thing!" said Frederic. "Yes, it is a sad pity. How sweet her voice would be! How I should love to hear it! But I am sure that her misfortune makes her more interesting in my eyes. Did you say that she lives in the wood?"

"Yes, monsieur. Oh, it is very easy to find it, — the cottage of old Marguerite. You follow the path which goes into the willows; to the left you

see a clearing; you descend a little hill, and then the cottage is before you."

"Thank you, my boy."

"But see, monsieur; we are at Grenoble. You do not need me any longer."

"No, my friend. — But wait; take this extra for your trouble."

"Thanks, monsieur; when you have need of anyone in our village, my name is Julian, and I shall be glad to serve you."

"I shall be sure to remember you."

The two cavaliers dismounted from the horse. The young guide took their place, saluted the travellers and went off at a gentle trot. Frederic's thoughts were filled with the touching story which the little man had related with such sympathy. He walked in silence beside his two companions, who were in active discussion as they entered Grenoble. They could not decide on the best fashion of serving a duck with olives, and the dispute lasted a long time. Dubourg described the method adopted in Brittany, and Ménard fell back upon the principles he had drawn from the Royal Cookbook.

On their return to the inn each one sought repose, for the day had been fatiguing, and all were in need of rest. But Frederic found no sleep upon his couch. The charming face of the young girl filled his imagination with sweet fancies. He thought of her misfortune, and of

the pathetic story which had been told him, saying to himself, "How she loved her brother! What a tender soul! What a burning heart! How delightful to inspire such a love, to read it in her lovely eyes; for they almost supply the speech that she has lost!"

All night Frederic thought of nothing but Sister Anne. At daybreak he arose, and left his companions to enjoy the repose from which he fled. He went out from the inn, called for a horse, and galloped away on the road to the village of Vizille.

CHAPTER XI

A Day in the Wood

Love is the god who most agreeably charms our leisure hours. He overleaps space, he annihilates distance, he causes us to forget the flight of time. A lover never feels ennui, even though he be unhappy. Memories, plans, and hopes continually lull a love-smitten heart. One may love as well in a cottage set in the midst of the grassy fields, the overshadowing foliage, the soft mosses and feathery ferns of the country, as in the most beautiful mansion of a magnificent city. There are even those who declare that love in the country is a deeper, purer feeling; but at any rate one would expect it to be more natural and unaffected there. It is not given to the mountaineer, the woodcutter, the day laborer to enjoy the fine arts, to occupy himself with financial schemes or political matters; but it is permitted to him, as to everybody else, to experience the delights and compensations of love, and that is a very fortunate thing, indeed, for humankind. I do not remember what author it was who said, with great truth:

"I think the happiest time in the life of a man,

is that which he spends in paying court to the woman of his heart."

It is a great pity that this time is so short. Possibly it is for the sake of renewing this happiness that men fall in love so frequently. Women do not treat love so lightly; for them it is the real history of life, while for men it is only a romance.

But Frederic had reached that valley where the peasants had danced the night before, and which was now as quiet as were the adjacent neighborhoods. Some peasant women were at work here and there in the fields; in the country the pleasure of the evening does not interfere with the labor of the following day. The good people were delighted to talk over the amusements of the festival, which would not be repeated for an entire year; but the time would pass quickly for them, they knew so well how to employ it.

Frederic directed his course towards the little clump of willows. He dismounted from his horse, fastened it to a tree and disappeared in the woods. He sought the young girl on the banks of the brook, but she was not where he had seen her the evening before. He went off into the thickest part of the wood, recalled what his little guide had told him, and turned to the left. All was calm and peaceful. The thick foliage of the firs allowed scarcely a ray of sunshine to pass their heavy crowns. At length Frederic found himself in a little clearing. He ascended a hillock and

saw that he was not far from a shabby old cottage.

The wood of which this wretched hovel had been built was decayed and falling to pieces; the straw roof was a ruin. A fence surrounded a little garden at the right of the cottage, but it had partly fallen down.

Frederic felt his heart contract at sight of this dwelling, which revealed dire poverty, and lack of the simplest necessaries of life.

"It is there that she lives," he said to himself, "and she has lived in misery and solitude there since she was seven years old. Poor little girl! Your sublime devotion, your misfortune, is worthy of the homage of mankind; and yet you have found only this miserable cabin, where you can weep for your brother and your parents. And still you are happy, because you have not been deprived of a home and of bread."

Frederic stood leaning against a tree, gazing at the cabin. His heart was so full that he felt himself unable to move. He could only sigh while he repeated, "She is there! She is there!"

Some moments passed. Then suddenly the door of the cottage opened; a young girl stood upon the threshold and looked out into the wood. It was she. The melancholy of this wild spot, the sombre aspect of the woods, the poverty of the cabin,—all disappeared. The presence of the young girl instantly made the spot radiant. The

woman we love has a great power. She communicates her charm to all her surroundings. When she enters, the most frightful cavern is not terrifying, and the most savage landscape becomes delicious.

Sister Anne turned back into the cabin. She reappeared presently, leading four goats, which composed all her flock. A cow browsed in the little garden. She caressed it as she passed, and seemed to promise to return soon. The young girl drove her goats towards a hill, where there was abundance of fresh grass, walking slowly behind them. Her head was slightly bent upon her breast, and she only lifted it to see that her goats did not wander away.

Frederic remained leaning against the tree, which concealed him almost entirely, but he did not lose a single movement of Sister Anne. When she turned towards the hill he followed her softly. He burned to be near her, to speak to her; but he did not dare to appear too suddenly, lest he should frighten her. She seemed so timid, so fearful — and she might run away.

Presently she seated herself upon a little green knoll, drew from her pocket a bit of brown bread and some figs, and began to eat her breakfast. Frederic ventured to approach a little nearer. At last he was quite close, and when she turned to look after one of her goats her eyes encountered those of the young man she had seen the evening before.

The maiden started, as if more astonished than

frightened; and in fact there was nothing in Frederic to frighten anyone. He stood erect before her, trembling and much disturbed, his glance tender and seeming to ask pardon for his intrusion. His whole expression bespoke the interest she had inspired in him.

Sister Anne started to rise, as if to go away

"Oh, please," said Frederic to her, "do not run away from me, sweet girl. I shall be very unhappy if I frighten you."

The maiden smiled, and shook her head gently, to let him know that she had no such feeling.

"I saw you last evening on the bank of the brook," continued Frederic, approaching her. Sister Anne looked at him, and bent her head, smiling a little as if to say she remembered him.

"What! you remember me? But you, sweet child, have not been out of my thoughts a moment. How could I help being struck by such grace, such charming features?"

The young girl listened to him with surprise. All that he said was new to her. Frederic seated himself upon the grass, some steps from her. This action astonished the young mute. She looked at him with a sort of fear; but the light in his eyes warmed her heart, and reassured her very quickly. She dropped her eyes, but it was easy to read in her lovely and innocent features that she awaited with curiosity what Frederic would say next.

"When I saw you yesterday," he went on, "I felt the most tender interest in you. But how much this has increased, since I learned — Poor little girl! Ah, they told me your sad story. I know all the misfortunes that have weighed upon you!"

A new expression crossed the features of the young girl. A frightful memory seemed to agitate her. She groaned, as if trying to speak. She lifted her gaze to heaven, lowered it again to the earth, and a torrent of tears burst from her eyes.

Frederic approached her. He slipped his arm gently about Sister Anne. He took one of her hands and laid it on his heart.

"I have recalled your sorrows," he said; "forgive me. What can I do now to drive them away and make you happy? Poor child! let me dry your tears. From this moment you are not alone in this world; you have a friend. There is a heart which responds to yours, and as long as it lives it will beat for you. Anne, dear friend, will you let me love you? Will you let me share your sorrows, your anguish? Will you let me think of you constantly, and see you each day? Ah, don't refuse me this kindness, or I shall be more unhappy than you!"

Frederic spoke with warmth. Love roused him, and his voice became more tender, his eyes more than ever powerful. The young mute had listened

to him at first with surprise. A strange sentiment troubled her. She tried to draw away her hand; she had not the power to do so. Frederic had ceased speaking, but she listened still.

In an instant the consciousness of her sorrow returned to her, and destroyed the joy of this new and beautiful experience. She glanced mournfully at Frederic. Then her eyes fell more bitterly upon herself. She withdrew her hand, and repulsed Frederic, shaking her head in distress, as if she would say, "No, no! You cannot love me! I am too unhappy!"

Frederic understood her. He pressed her hand again to his heart, and pointed to the cottage.

"With you," he said, "I am sure that I could be happy if I lived in this wood."

At this moment the sound of a little bell warned Anne that old Marguerite had risen. She hastened to collect her goats, and prepared to return to the cabin.

"Are you coming back?" asked Frederic. "Ah, I wish I could see you again today."

She pointed to the sun, the rays of which pierced the foliage, then lowered her head on the back of her hand.

"When the sun sets, you will be on the bank of the brook?"

Sister Anne nodded assent; then, calling to her goats, she returned quickly to the cabin. But before entering she turned her head, and her eyes

rested on the place where she had last seen Frederic. She smiled and disappeared.

This smile, this look, filled the young lover with delight. He was no longer a stranger, an unknown, to Sister Anne! The idea enchanted him. In love a little thing makes us very happy.

Frederic went for his horse; but should he go back to Grenoble, to return the same evening? No; it seemed to him more sensible to remain at the village, where he could get a light lunch, and then return to the woods, and wander about near the cottage which had become so dear to him.

It did not matter to him what his companions would think and say. It was just as well that they should get accustomed to his absences; for Frederic felt that he would come often to Vizille, or, rather, that he would return seldom to Grenoble. The one who was dearer to him than all the world lived in this wood. Sister Anne was already everything to him. He thought no more of the future, of his rank, of his father's plans for him. He dreamed of her only, and wished to live but for her. It is true this love dated only from the evening before, and that Frederic was not yet twenty-one years old.

He went to the village for rest and breakfast, and there he talked to everyone of Sister Anne. All took delight in praising her virtues, her sweetness, her refinement. The peasants added, "The poor girl is much to be pitied. She will spend her

life in that miserable cottage, for who would want to marry an unfortunate mute?"

Frederic smiled, and said nothing; but he thought much, for he had seen women in Paris of dazzling charm, brilliant, attractive by reason of jewels; yet he preferred to all of them the gentle young mute of the wood.

The young man found refreshments for the inner man at the village. He gave his horse a generous ration, then mounted it, and once more took the road to the wood. He fastened his horse to a tree and directed his steps toward the lowly cabin.

The sun had not yet finished half its course, but Frederic hoped that if he kept near the little cabin he should see Sister Anne, and that would give him patience to wait until evening. He could not be sure of more than a distant sight of her, but that would be enough.

The little fence which enclosed the garden was only four feet high, and it was easy to take in at a glance the whole of the tiny property. The garden was small, but every inch of it was utilized. Several fruit-trees, some vines, beans and flowers grew and mingled together in this restricted space, where Nature was allowed to follow all her caprices.

As Frederic looked ahead he saw an old woman seated under a fig-tree. She seemed very aged, but her venerable face reflected sweetness and

repose of soul. Frederic watched her some moments with deep respect; she had rescued Anne, and had been a mother to her.

The face of the old woman broke into a smile as the young mute approached her, holding in her hands a wooden bowl filled with milk, which she had brought for Marguerite's breakfast, and which she placed upon her knees. The old woman tapped her caressingly upon the cheek, saying, —

"That's a good daughter; that is good, dear child. Now sit down here, near me. You know I love to look at you while I eat my breakfast."

The young girl sat down immediately beside Marguerite. She seemed to divine her slightest wishes, and more than once she took the old woman's hand in hers and kissed it lovingly.

Frederic remained in the same spot, as if held there by a spell. He could pass hours contentedly in studying this picture. The old woman having finished her breakfast, which consisted of fruits and milk, rose, and with the aid of Sister Anne took a little walk about the garden. Frederic concealed himself when they passed near him, but he noticed that the young girl glanced into the wood, and seemed to be looking for someone.

Was she thinking of him? Ah, how happy he would be if he could believe it! His heart leaped at the thought. He was tempted to enter the garden, to throw himself at Sister Anne's feet; but the presence of old Marguerite restrained him.

At length they returned to the cottage. Frederic left the spot from which he had so long studied the garden. He wandered about the wood for some time. Every place suggested the orphan to him; each tree, each shrub spoke of her, revealed her presence. Had she not lived in this wood for nine years? Her feet had pressed this grass, and her eyes had rested on all that surrounded him.

Frederic went slowly down toward the brook. He seated himself in the spot where he had seen Sister Anne for the first time. It would be long before she could join him. He drew his tablets from his pocket; he took out his pencil. What should he write? Verses to Sister Anne! Are not all lovers poets, and are not the poets much more eloquent when they are lovers? We still remember the verses which Tibullus made for Delia; Ovid immortalized Julia; Orpheus enchanted hell with his songs when he went in search of Eurydice; love thrilled the lyre of Anacreon; love inspired Sappho. The charms of Lesbia inflamed the genius of Catullus, as those of Cynthia gave a more delicate, a richer quality to the verses of Propertius. Is not Petrarch indebted to Laura for a large part of his glory? Without her he would have been a poet, but could he have been so great a painter of love? We owe the tender elegies of Bertin, and the graceful verses of Parny, to Eucharis and Eleonora.

Time passes very quickly when we are writing verses of those we love. Frederic leaned over his tablets, absorbed in them, when a slight noise disturbed him. He turned his head; Sister Anne was behind him, looking with curiosity at what he was doing. She blushed at having betrayed her interest so frankly, but Frederic reassured her. He made her sit down beside him, and read to her the verses he had been writing.

Sister Anne knew nothing at all of poetry, but she understood what Frederic wished to say in the verses he read to her. The heart is the key of the understanding of natural, uninstructed women. It is quite the contrary, sometimes, for those who have much culture.

The young girl began to be less timid, less embarrassed, with Frederic. At sixteen, acquaintances are very quickly made, especially when nothing is known of social customs, of propriety, and the laws they impose.

Frederic seemed so good, so sweet, so full of sympathy! He was sorry for her. He thought of her, and the poor orphan was astonished to find that there was another person in the world besides old Marguerite who was interested in her fate. The village people showed compassion and pity for her; but it is not pleasant to be always an object of pity, and the sentiment in Frederic's heart was a very different one from that. She read something much more beautiful in his eyes. Be-

sides, he spoke to her with lively interest; he looked at her tenderly. In spite of herself she was already less unhappy.

Night fell. They were still sitting by the brook. They had been there two hours, but they did not dream that the time was so long.

Anne rose, pointed with her finger to Frederic's horse, which stood waiting for him. Then she looked uneasily about toward the village, the wood, the hills which led to the village, and once more her eyes rested inquiringly on Frederic.

"I am going to Grenoble," he said. "I am staying there now with two friends, who perhaps are disturbed at my long absence. But I shall come back tomorrow. I shall come back every day. Could I pass a single day without seeing you?"

The maiden smiled and was content. She led him to his horse. Frederic took the sweet hand of Sister Anne and pressed it to his lips. At last he tore himself away and started on the road to the town. The young girl went to the edge of the wood, in order to follow him with her eyes as long as the gathering twilight permitted her to distinguish his figure. At last, when she could no longer hear the horse's steps, she returned to the cabin. She was thoughtful, dreamy, full of astonishment at the new feeling that enveloped her. She did not understand it, and the young mute returned to the cottage very slowly.

CHAPTER XII

How We Love At Twenty Years

"WHERE the devil have you been?" said Dubourg to Frederic, who had arrived at the inn just as his two companions were about to sit down to their supper.

"Oh, I have been looking about me, investigating the neighborhood," answered the young man indifferently.

"What mania has taken you, that you are forever running about the fields like this? Are you going to begin again here the life that you led at Lyons?"

"Very likely," answered the young man, "and why should I not?"

"That will be very amusing for us others who must remain here without occupation. At Lyons, at least, we could vary our pleasure, see people —"

"Yes; the Marquise de Versac, for instance," said Frederic.

"But here it's different! We already know this town by heart. If we could but introduce ourselves into some agreeable society; but when you have neither credit nor money you dare not pre-

sent yourself anywhere. You have an awkward air that betrays you immediately. But do you really think you must know every tree and rock, every bush, every bit of scenery, wherever we go? If you mean to stop before every tiny rivulet we cross, we shall be ten years reaching Italy, and your life will not be long enough to see the half of Europe."

"Indeed," said Ménard, "the Baron's remarks seem to me very sensible. We go no faster than turtles, si parva licet componere magnis."

"I would pardon you for staying at Naples or Florence. We can never study those monuments too much; enjoy the Coliseum at Rome or the Cathedral of Saint Peter; climb Posilipo or Mount Vesuvius. I should not be surprised if you did that. But in this country, what do you see that is extraordinary? It is picturesque, romantic,—good enough in its way; but we shall find much more remarkable places on our route. Wait until you are on the glaciers of Mont Blanc before you fall into an ecstacy, or upon a pinnacle of the Apenines; but don't stay a whole day lost in admiration over an old mulberry which shades a little rivulet, because everywhere you can find trees, shrubbery, grass and brooks, except perhaps in the deserts of Africa, and we will not go so far as that."

"Dear friend," said Frederic, "I have found here what I shall seek vainly elsewhere. It is worth more to me than all the wonders of the world."

As he said these words Frederic entered his room, without waiting to speak further to Dubourg, for he was much in need of rest.

"Say, now; tell us what you have found!" cried Dubourg. "What the devil can he have found, Monsieur Ménard?"

"I have no idea, Baron."

"Do you suppose it is the pocketbook they stole from me at Lyons?"

"Or your coach, Baron."

"My coach! You can rest assured it is eaten up before this; that is to say, that rascal of a postilion has long since sold it for drink money."

"Indeed, that is probable. What a pity! Such a venerable coach!"

"But what do you suppose he has found that is so charming?"

"Perhaps a safe way of carrying soft-boiled eggs while travelling."

"Oh, do you suppose Frederic would bother himself about that?"

"But, Baron, that would be a wonderful discovery for the traveller. I had a splendid recipe, which someone gave me for making milk punch; but unfortunately I have lost it in all our moving."

"I can see that we shall not know what he has found unless he chooses to tell us the secret."

"I shall think of it in my sleep, Baron."

"And I shall go to sleep thinking of it, Monsieur Ménard."

The next day at dawn Frederic was again on the road to the village. He descended into the valley and left his horse in a field where the grass was up to his knees. He followed the little path with rapid steps, and in a moment he was in the wood, then on the hillock, and by the side of Sister Anne, who had already taken her little flock to pasture.

A vivid red glowed in the young girl's cheeks at sight of Frederic. She smiled, and extended her hand in friendship. Although it was so early, she had already been looking for him. She had become impatient because he did not come, and had looked again and again down the road leading to Grenoble. She had known Frederic only two days, but love makes rapid progress in a heart so tender and pure. Is it possible that she already felt love for the young stranger? Poor little thing! I am afraid she did. But was it not very natural? Was she not of an age when love enters into all our thoughts and sentiments? And it was very easy to fall in love with Frederic.

"I am later than yesterday," he said; "my horse was not so impatient as I. Dear friend, I am so happy near you! I wish I need never leave you."

Anne looked at him for a long time. She sighed, pointed to the road to the town, then glanced at the cottage, as if to say, "We shall always be separated."

"Leave this cottage, consent to follow me," said Frederic, warmly, "and we shall never lose each other again!"

The maiden rose, and made a gesture of fright. Pointing again towards the cabin, she imitated the wavering steps of old Marguerite. She shook her head with great decision; her eyes glowed with a heavenly light, which said to Frederic, "Never! I will never abandon her!"

"Ah, pardon me!" he exclaimed. "Yes, I was wrong; I feel it. Your heart could never be ungrateful. Forgive me; love made me forget."

The young mute was not angry with him. She came and seated herself near him, and a charming smile lighted her features. The wind lifted her lovely hair and blew it across Frederic's face. She laughed as she freed him from her hair.

He passed one of his arms around her waist and drew the pretty head against his shoulder. His eyes exchanged tender glances with those of Sister Anne. His lips touched her cheek, and the fragrant breath of the lovely mute mingled with the air he breathed. Are not such instants the most precious in love, and the happiest in life?

Part of the day passed in this fashion. Frederic remained in the wood. Sister Anne brought him fruits and milk, so that he would not be obliged to go to the village. The maiden could not bear to think of his going away. She ran frequently into the cottage to see if Marguerite needed her,

but the old woman slept during part of the day, and Sister Anne always ran back to her new friend.

Towards evening the young girl remained longer with her foster-mother, and Frederic went down to the bank of the brook, waiting there for Sister Anne's return. He passed the time in writing another poem for her. When the young girl found him writing she sighed deeply. She lifted her eyes sorrowfully to him, as if to say, "I know nothing! I shall never know anything!" And Frederic assured her, "I will be your master. I will teach you to speak upon paper."

When night came the young man hesitated to leave his companion. She walked with him sorrowfully to get his horse, and, though her lips said nothing, her eyes said, "Tomorrow!"

Eight days slipped away in this fashion. Each morning Frederic left Grenoble at break of day, took the first horse he found at the inn, and hurried to Vizille. He spent every day with Sister Anne, and only left her at night.

Frederic did not live when he was separated from the young mute, and Sister Anne knew no happiness except when she was with him. Love had seized upon her heart, and she did not try to combat it. Why should she fear so charming a conqueror? Why should she endeavor to drive away a sentiment that brought her such great happiness?

Frederic had very attractive qualities. He told her frequently that he loved her, that he would love her all his life. She could not doubt his oaths. She did not know there was such a sin as inconstancy. Why should Frederic deceive her? She gave herself up to the pleasure of loving. Her lips could not frame for him tender assurances in return for his sweet words, but her eyes told him all that passed in her soul; and a single one of these glances was worth more than the most ardent words of another.

Frederic wished to teach Anne to write, but love played havoc with the lessons he intended to give her. Seated near her, he pressed her to him, looking into her charming face, her intoxicating eyes. He paused, and forgot what he intended to teach her. She looked at him, she smiled, and they dropped the lesson. Frederic pressed her against his heart. They forgot everything, except that they loved each other; but one is timid with innocence, especially when one really loves.

The most timid love, however, grows bolder. The habit of seeing each other, of being together, and of manifesting their tenderness, united them more closely each day. They were always alone in the wood, and it was a very dangerous place for innocence. Could they long resist their hearts, the fire which devoured them? Frederic dared everything, and Sister Anne gave herself to him without regrets, without remorse, for it seemed

to her quite natural to make that one happy whom she would love all her life.

In the delirium of his love, Frederic did not wish to be absent from his sweetheart long enough to return to Grenoble to sleep. The four leagues which separated him from the city would make him lose a few moments of her society in the morning, and would necessitate his leaving her a little earlier in the evening.

"No," he said, "I will no longer go so far from you! I cannot be an hour, a moment, away from you! If I cannot see you I would rather sleep in the woods, on the grass — anywhere near your cottage; and shall I not be much happier so?"

The pretty mute fell upon his neck, embraced him, committed a thousand follies! Every gesture expressed her happiness. He will leave her no more! Then she will always be happy! The poor little thing believed that this was possible. Suddenly, as if struck by a new idea, she led Frederic to the cottage, and showed him a window, — that of the room where old Marguerite slept. Near it was another casement. It was that of the young girl's room. She took Frederic to that side, placed her head on the back of her hand, drew him towards her breast and looked at him with joy. The young man understood. He pressed her to his heart, crying, —

"Yes, I will rest with you — always beside you. Ah, we shall be very happy!"

The child of nature learns very quickly the art of loving; for to love well, there is no need of school or teacher, — the heart is the best master. Several times Sister Anne wished to take Frederic to her foster mother. She did not understand why he seemed so anxious to keep out of Marguerite's sight. But her sweetheart said to her, —

"Marguerite would not allow you the same liberty, if she knew that you saw me constantly. She would say, on the contrary, that you must avoid me, and not speak to me."

These words were enough to keep Sister Anne from thinking further of that. Forbid her to see Frederic! Command her to flee from him! That would be enough to condemn her to tears for the rest of her life. She knew well that she would never have the strength to obey such a command, and so it would be better to conceal her happiness from Marguerite.

Every day the good old woman became more feeble. She seldom left her arm-chair, and she slept there a great part of the time. It was very easy to conceal the truth from her.

The night fell on that day when Frederic had decided that he could no longer be separated from her who had taught him the secret of real love, and who had testified her perfect faith in him. The approach of darkness no longer drove him from the wood. On the contrary, the night would bring him greater happiness.

He gave no thought to his companions, to the anxiety he might cause them, to their embarrassment, for he had all the money; he did not remember that he had a horse which belonged to the inn,— he thought of nothing in the world but Sister Anne. The memory of his father did not trouble his happiness. The present was everything for him; Sister Anne filled his thoughts; he had never known a woman who could be compared to her. Could he find anywhere in the world so much beauty and grace, so much innocence and love? Her misfortune only made him love her more. Frederic was very romantic, and he did not treat love so lightly as do most young men of his age; his conduct ought therefore to be considered less extraordinary. And besides, the young mute was so pretty! In the first transports of love, a cabin, a wood, a desert, is what one prefers. All lovers experience this romantic feeling, but with most it is of short duration. Will Frederic be more constant?

On the bank of the brook, in the path where they had so often met, Frederic waited in the gathering darkness until Marguerite had fallen asleep. Then Sister Anne was to step softly out of the cottage door, run down the pathway and look for her lover.

Frederic fastened his horse in an old ruined shed, where a wood-cutter had formerly lived, and which served the young man now for a stable.

The moon shone with soft splendor over all the scene. Its radiance was reflected in the clear water of the brook, and fell in pale, glimmering rays through the opening of the wood, and over the clearings scattered here and there.

Frederic listened attentively. He was eager for the footsteps of his beloved. The time seemed long to him; each moment as it glided away cost a sigh of love. He glanced back to the wood; his eyes sought to pierce the black firs, to penetrate even to the cottage.

Presently he heard a slight sound. It was she! He could not see her yet, but his heart announced her presence. Light as a fawn, swift as the arrow of the hunter, beautiful as happiness, the young mute slipped rapidly and joyously through the forest paths which she knew so well. In a moment she was beside her lover, who pressed a kiss upon her brow, and could only gaze at her for some moments.

Frederic was proud of his happiness. The time, the place, the pleasure which animated her features, the mystery which environed them,—all seemed to make Sister Anne still more pretty. Her hair was lightly knotted, and part of it fell on her neck. The charming outlines of her figure were veiled but not concealed by a light garment; and her eyes were so sweet, so full of love! All these things brought to Frederic a new intoxication.

"Come, come!" he said. "Show me the way!"

The little girl took his arm and guided him through the thickness of the wood. Soon they reached the cottage, and Frederic entered the humble dwelling, which became in his eyes the most delightful haven. Had he reason to envy those who live in a palace? Happy lovers! Let us leave them to their sweet solitude.

CHAPTER XIII

Dubourg Once More Plays the Gentleman
New Acquaintances

On the day following Frederic's first absence, M. Ménard, who had risen very early, repaired to Dubourg's apartment just as the latter was awakening, and exclaimed loudly with a triumphant air, —

"I have found it, Monsieur le Baron, I am certain that I have found it!"

"Found what? Your receipt for keeping soft boiled eggs?"

"No, not that, but this wonder which charmed M. le Count yesterday: this wonder which induces him to spend his days —"

"You don't say so! You really know what it is?"

"Oh, I am willing to wager that I know it," answered M. Ménard.

"Tell it then, quickly."

"It's the Château de Bayard, which is somewhere in the neighborhood of this town, in the valley of Gresivaudan."

"The Château de Bayard? Indeed, now that I come to think of it, that is very possible.

At least we will ask him about it while we are at breakfast."

But breakfast was served and Frederic did not appear. Dubourg called one of the waiters of the inn.

"Has our companion already gone out?"

"Yes, monsieur; he started at daybreak. He took the first horse that was ready, and was gone at a gallop."

"Gone already! And he has left us here again for all day perhaps."

"I am sure it is the Bayard castle that has turned his head."

"Ahem! Well, as for myself, I shouldn't be surprised if it were a more modern wonder. But if we have nothing better to do, let's visit the ruins of the castle; we can look for Frederic there. What do you think, Monsieur Ménard?"

"I am entirely of your opinion, Baron. Perhaps it would not be a bad idea to take a pie or a chicken with us, for probably we shall not be able to dine at the castle."

"You talk according to syntax, Monsieur Ménard. We will arm ourselves with provisions; that may not be very chivalric, but it will be prudent. We will only travel like amateur troubadours. We will drive where we please. We are not too great to love our dinner, so we will spread our table at the most beautiful points, in the most imposing ruins. Ah, Monsieur Ménard, we are

not romantic; it is well for us that we were not born in the days of Amadis and of the four sons of Aymon."

"My faith, yes, Baron. In those days they had not learned how to stuff a chicken with truffles, or to serve a filet de sole with cheese."

Dubourg informed himself as to the best road to the valley of Grésivaudan. M. Ménard filled his pockets with provisions, and our travellers began their journey.

They had been told that it was three short leagues to the Château de Bayard. Every half-hour M. Ménard proposed a rest. Dubourg accepted, and drew from his pocket a bottle of the best wine that he could find at their inn. Ménard set forth his collation on a sheet of paper which was spread on the grass, and the travellers refreshed themselves. If Dubourg saw fine fruit hanging, he climbed a tree to secure dessert. Then, cutting some branches, he attached his handkerchief to them, making a little tent, so as to dine in the shade. Ménard exclaimed,—

"No one would suspect a noble palatine did that!"

"And why not?" Dubourg replied. "The Princess Nausicaa did her own washing; the daughters of Augustus wove their father's robes; Dionysius the younger was master of a school at Corinth; the son of Perseus, King of Macedonia, was a carpenter at Rome; Peter the Great was

one in Holland: so I do not consider it unbecoming to put up a tent in Dauphiny."

M. Ménard had nothing to reply to this, and he contented himself with a bow and a murmur of "Variant sententiæ."

At length the two travellers reached the ruins of Bayard Castle, of which only four towers remained standing; but they did not see Frederic wrapped in contemplation before its walls.

"Well," said Dubourg, "do you see him, Monsieur Ménard?"

"The castle?"

"Frederic!"

"Not yet, Baron; but let us sit down; let us wait awhile. I am afraid, unhappily, that this may be the last time we can refresh ourselves, for our provisions are drawing to an end. We have only a quarter of a bottle left."

"We will find a spring, Monsieur Ménard."

"But they will not be like those of Cana, Baron. While we wait, let us empty the bottle and finish the chicken. From this point we have a beautiful view of the country."

"This valley is charming. See, Monsieur Ménard, on the right; those mountains covered with snow produce a most picturesque effect and recall to me my mountains at Krapach. Look yonder, where the snow is eternal; at the height of four hundred feet it never melts."

"I see, Baron, that we are holding our last

wing, and I tremble when I think of our return."

"We will stop at some house, at a mill. There are many of them hereabouts."

"Have you any money, Baron?"

"Not a sou, Monsieur Ménard. And you?"

"No more than you."

"The devil! That is a little embarrassing. And this Frederic abandons us and takes the money with him, without disturbing himself as to what becomes of us. Of course we can live at the inn, where our account is open; but it is not pleasant to be nailed to our inn while monsieur goes on a promenade."

"It is certain, Baron, that the promenade gives us an appetite."

"Zounds! This trip begins to be monotonous, and if I were not afraid of my creditors —"

"Your creditors, Baron?"

"I would say, if I had not some creditors of my government to satisfy — well, if — but hush! there are some people coming. No doubt they are visiting the ruins. It must be that they live in the neighborhood, for their dress does not indicate a long walk."

M. Ménard lifted his head. He saw a lady and gentleman who came from the left and directed their steps slowly towards the castle. The tutor hurried to make their collation vanish by stuffing the napkin and the bottle into his pocket. Then

he rose, and rejoined Dubourg. The Baron walked towards the pleasure-seekers, and his air was already more fashionable and elegant. He swaggered gracefully, in a manner which recalled to Ménard their walks in Lyons; and he said to himself, "It seems that the Baron is not going to preserve his incognito." Then, on his own part, he pulled out his shirt frills, stood more erect, and added some severity to his manner.

Dubourg had replaced with a simple round hat the wretched headgear which had been forced upon him at the house of the pretended marquise, but he had still on his boots the little silver tassels. He had preserved also his talent for giving to his countenance the expression of the character he wished to personate. When he was near the people who were visiting the ruins, you would have decided, from his manner, his voice, his conversation, and the lordly way in which he glanced about him, that he was some noble stranger.

The dress and the appearance of the lady and gentleman whom Dubourg wished to join indicated easy circumstances, but also provincial breeding and some pretension. The gentleman, who was about fifty, wore his hair powdered. He carried his hat in his hand, so as not to tumble his hair, which was carefully curled in sugar-loaf style. He wore a black coat, with trousers of the same color, and top boots which fell below his calves. He carried a cane with which he pointed out the

various objects of interest to the person who accompanied him. His countenance wore a look of contentment which indicated his satisfaction with his own attainments, to which was added an air of importance, which he undoubtedly felt himself obliged to maintain.

The lady on his arm was at least forty. She was well preserved, but she made the unpardonable mistake of endeavoring to appear only twenty. Despite her agreeable manners, her lisping, mincing speech, her curls worn behind her ears and drooping from beneath her bonnet, and a carriage which she tried to render sprightly and juvenile, one could easily perceive that she was middle-aged.

Dubourg advanced toward the château, without seeming to pay any attention to the strangers, except to bestow upon them a passing bow; but he made a pretence of continuing to chat with Monsieur Ménard, and spoke so as to be heard from a distance.

"This castle recalls to me that of my ancestors in the neighborhood of Sandomir. You know, my dear Ménard, — that one where we sustained such a long, such a terrible siege."

Ménard gazed at Dubourg in astonishment, but he hastened to say,—

"Oh, yes, Baron, I know very well."

"There is a tower," resumed Dubourg, "which bears a striking resemblance to that placed at the

east end of my château at Krapach. I seem to see myself again in the chamber where the prince of Bulgaria slept, when he came to break bread with my father. Ah, dear Ménard, I hope I shall have the pleasure of seeing you there, and offering you some of that famous Tokay wine of which I have spoken to you."

"The Tokay of Tékély, Baron?"

"Precisely. It has been bottled twenty-four years."

The lady and gentleman heard distinctly all that Dubourg said. He walked about, pretending to examine the castle, but taking pains not to go too far from them.

While Dubourg spoke, the gentleman was very attentive. His face assumed an expression of consideration, of respect. He pressed his wife's arm, — for it was his wife who was with him, — so that she would notice Dubourg, and was careful to quicken his steps, in order to keep near the illustrious stranger.

At the foot of one of the towers the lady and gentleman found themselves quite close to our two travellers. They were about to enter the ruins. Dubourg paused to give place to the lady. The husband did the same for him. This brought him opposite Ménard, and he bowed. These ceremonies ended, conversation began.

"Is monsieur visiting our country for pastime?" asked the gentleman, approaching Dubourg.

"Yes, monsieur; I am travelling for pleasure, with my friend, the Count of Montreville, of whom you have perhaps heard, and Monsieur Ménard, a distinguished professor of belles-lettres, a Hellenist of the first quality, who turns a couplet like an angel — especially at dessert."

The gentleman bowed to Ménard, whose eyes grew big with astonishment when he heard he could turn a couplet easily. But he was careful not to contradict the Baron.

"Do you live in this neighborhood, monsieur?" added Dubourg.

"Yes, monsieur," replied the lady, smiling; "we are at Allevard, about two and a half leagues from this spot. My husband bought a superb property there when he retired from the wine business."

Here the gentleman gave his wife a little nudge with his elbow, but she went on without paying any attention to him.

"We were in business only for pleasure. My husband has always had a sufficient fortune, but he wanted to do something."

"Indeed, madame. I have great respect for business — especially that of wines. Surely, Noah did not plant vineyards that we might have dried raisins only. Gideon, the Hebrew captain, himself thrashed his wheat; Saul drove his oxen; David guarded his sheep; Cincinnatus ploughed his field; Pope Sixtus V kept pigs; Urban IV

made shoes ; — I don't think it is at all surprising that your husband sold wine."

"Certainly, monsieur," said the husband, bowing to Dubourg. Then he said to his wife, sotto voce, "He is a noble philosopher."

"But since we are retired," the lady went on, "we see only the best people in the neighborhood. The mayor, the recorder and the principal property owners, — they are all people of good position. We really lead a charming life. My husband is almost the seigneur of the district."

"It is true," continued the gentleman, supporting himself upon his cane, "that I am looked upon in that light. I could have been sub-prefect of the district, it lay entirely with myself; but I should have had to change my residence, and I like my neighborhood. We are so much thought of there! We give the finest dinners; we cultivate the arts, — music. I am now studying the violin. I have sent to Paris for an organ in a case. My wife will play it; she has an ear."

"Well, now," cried Dubourg, "speaking of having an ear, here is Monsieur Ménard, who has one of the finest bass voices I ever heard. As for me, I play all instruments."

"Ah, monsieur," exclaimed the lady, with her prettiest air, "what pleasure it would give us to hear you! We have many amateurs at Allevard. The mayor plays the violoncello, and one of our neighbors is very strong on the hunting-horn. If

monsieur remains long in the vicinity we shall be charmed to entertain him."

The lady accompanied this invitation with a very tender smile. Dubourg responded with an expressive look, the husband bowed with satisfaction and humility, and Ménard looked at his companion to see what he ought to do.

Dubourg was about five minutes in exchanging glances with the lady, and during this time her husband watched the swallows.

"Indeed, madame," he said, when he had finished his ogling, "I may remain some time with my friends at Grenoble. The Count of Montreville has a great fondness for the banks of the Isère, and I love him too well to go on without him. We are Orestes and Pylades, if we are not very often together, and although we are expected at the court of Sardinia,—and I have promised to spend the winter at the court of Bulgaria,—it is just possible, as I tell you, that our stay in this neighborhood may be prolonged some time. Is it not so, Monsieur Ménard?"

"I agree with you, Baron," said Ménard.

The lady murmured under her breath to her husband,—

"How amiable he is for a baron!"

Her husband responded, "It is just because he is a baron that he is so amiable."

Ménard continued the conversation. He put on an air of greater importance because he knew

he was talking to a man who was only a retired wine merchant.

"It is altogether likely," he said, "because the Count of Montreville, my pupil, is of an extremely romantic temperament."

"Ah, that is like me — that is like me!" cried the lady, heaving a sigh. She again addressed herself to Dubourg. "I love only the romantic. I am perfectly silly over ghosts and demons. Am I not, Monsieur Chambertin?"

M. Chambertin (that was the gentleman's name) replied, smiling, "Yes; my wife has always loved spirits."

"She has not been in want of them with you," responded Dubourg.

"That is true, I have had them from twenty-four to seventy degrees."

"If madame ever makes a tour of Poland," said Dubourg, "I shall ask her to pass a few days at my castle of Krapach. She will find there phantoms of every color. It is not so gay a place as my palace of Cracovia; but it is a castle that I would not part with for two millions, and it brings me scarcely anything but snow. But I have good reason for holding it dear — have I not, Monsieur Ménard?"

"Indeed, I believe it," replied Ménard; "a castle where you have received —"

"Hush! Silence, Ménard! All that does not interest M. and Madame Chambertin."

"Pardon me, Baron," replied Chambertin, bowing. "We are much flattered in making the acquaintance of a Polish seigneur, for I believe that your excellency is a Polish baron."

"By birth," replied Dubourg, turning aside to give Ménard the opportunity of saying in a low voice, "It is his excellency, the Baron Ladislas Potoski, palatine of Rava and Sandomir."

On hearing these titles the retired wine merchant stood as if stupefied, not daring to take a step backward or forward. Madame Chambertin twisted her month in a hundred fashions, and left nothing undone for the fascination of the palatine of Rava.

"Have you come to visit the ruins?" asked Dubourg, after allowing a little time for his name to take effect.

"Yes," replied M. Chambertin. "We are not yet familiar with them, and it is really necessary to see their surroundings. This Bayard had a very fine castle, judging from what is left. But he was a famous gentleman."

"He was a chevalier — was he not, my dear?" said the lady, mincingly.

"Yes, my sweet; he was a knight of the century of Louis XIV."

Ménard coughed, and looked at Dubourg with a somewhat mocking air. M. Chambertin went on, —

"I love to study antiquities, ancient monu-

ments; it is amusing, when one has some learning. Are you studying, like ourselves, Baron?"

"Indeed," said Dubourg, "we were in rather a bad humor when we met you. We walked over from Grenoble, where they told us it was only three short leagues. I did not care to bring my carriage into these mountainous districts; but I hoped to find a good inn, where we could dine, or at least find a conveyance to the next village. I offered some peasants six pieces of gold to find me a horse, and not one of them budged. Is that not true, Ménard?"

"It is true that we have found nothing at all, Baron."

"Ah, my dear," said Madame Chambertin aside to her husband, "what a lovely idea! What an opportunity!"

"I will seize it," he replied. He placed himself before Dubourg in the third position, as he had learned his figures.

"Your excellency, if I am not indiscreet, if you do not object to accepting an invitation from a simple gentleman, untitled, we shall be charmed, Madame Chambertin and I, to entertain at our table a distinguished seigneur and a professor of belles-lettres. My carriage awaits us at no great distance, with Lunel, my jockey. In an hour we shall be at Allevard, and this evening my carriage shall take you home."

"Really, Monsieur de Chambertin, you are too

kind," replied Dubourg, bowing. The retired merchant whispered to his wife, —

"He called me de Chambertin."

"I heard it, my dear."

"Do you suppose he wishes to make me a chevalier?"

"I am sure he could do something for you."

"I am almost tempted to accept your invitation," continued Dubourg. "It will give me great pleasure to know such charming people. What do you think of it, dear Ménard? Will Montreville be anxious? Do you think we can take the time to dine with M. de Chambertin?"

"Yes, certainly we can, Baron," replied M. Ménard, who, excited by the pleasure of this invitation, carelessly drew from his pocket the napkin which had wrapped the chicken. He supposed it was his handkerchief and wiped his face with it, unaware that he covered his countenance with chicken jelly. But Monsieur and Madame Chambertin were in such a state of ecstacy that they did not notice anything of that sort. To think of having a great Polish nobleman to dine with them, a palatine, — one, moreover, who put de before monsieur's name, and made sweet eyes at madame, — was quite enough to turn the heads of the couple.

"We never can get four into that cabriolet," said madame.

"Don't worry, dear. I will take Lunel's little

horse. He can mount behind, and when the Baron wishes — "

"My faith! we will go," said Dubourg; and he added tenderly, as he offered his hand to madame, —

"The finest ruin in the world could not tempt me from you."

They took their departure. Dubourg gave his arm to madame; M. Chambertin ran ahead; and Ménard followed, trying in vain to discover whence came the odor of roast chicken, which pursued him everywhere. At the turning of a lane they saw the country carriage, watched by a little man of about his master's age. He looked more like a butler than a jockey, and he held an animal which, from its size and its ears, filled a place between the horse and the ass. Madame Chambertin got into the carriage with our two travellers.

"Give me your pony, Lunel," said M. Chambertin.

"And what shall I do, monsieur?" asked the old jockey.

"You will mount behind the carriage."

"You know very well, monsieur, I cannot hold on."

"Then follow on foot. Imbecile! not to know yet how to hold on behind a carriage."

As he said these words M. Chambertin mounted the pony and gave it two stout blows with his cane, as he had no riding-whip.

"Pardon me if I pass you," he cried to Dubourg, "but I must give some orders."

"Oh, I beg of you, don't take any trouble for us, Monsieur de Chambertin," replied the Baron.

But the landed gentleman was already far away; upon hearing himself called de Chambertin again, he had gone at a headlong pace.

Dubourg took the reins and drove, but this did not prevent him from saying some very gallant things to Madame de Chambertin, and he made a sign to Ménard to wipe his face. Lunel ran behind the carriage, wishing the devil would take these strangers who had caused his master to take his pony.

They reached Allevard, which was a pretty town, remarkable for a waterfall of considerable size, the power from which ran a number of mills, iron foundries and factories.

The house of Monsieur Chambertin was at the right of the road, near the village. It was a charming property, built in modern style, and, as Madame Chambertin said, almost a château.

As they descended from the carriage in a very beautiful court shaded with lindens, Dubourg secretly congratulated himself on his adventure. He found that Madame Chambertin was still charming, that she had a lovely figure and very expressive eyes. Ménard had caught a glimpse of a kitchen which appeared well supplied, and he decided that a man who possessed such a fine

establishment was worthy of consideration, even if he were neither a baron nor a palatine.

M. Chambertin ushered the strangers into a sumptuous salon on the first floor, which opened into a beautiful garden at the back of the house. Everything indicated wealth, profusion, and lack of taste. There were two clocks on a mantelpiece, another on a table, and another on a desk. The furniture was elegant, a costly carpet covered the parquet floor, the walls were closely hung with pictures, and three chandeliers were suspended from the ceiling.

"This is my little summer salon," said Madame Chambertin with a modest air. "If I had known I was to have the pleasure of receiving his excellency, the Baron, I would have prepared my great winter salon, where you can have three square dances without crowding."

"Madame, we have more room than we need. It would have distressed me to cause you inconvenience. This salon is charming, and everything testifies the taste of the goddess of the household."

"Oh, your excellency! It is true, I arranged it all. My husband wanted to put a clock in that corner, but it would not do."

"It would be difficult not to know the time of day here."

"This carpet is pretty enough. I have a still better one in my winter salon. But you must use a great many carpets in Poland, Baron."

"Oh, in Poland we have carpets six inches thick. You sink into them when you walk, as if you were on a feather bed. I hope to have the honor of sending you a piece of one."

"Oh, your excellency! Oh, Baron!"

At that moment M. Chambertin entered, with all the company he had been able to collect in haste, to come and dine with a great Polish nobleman. He had only found four people who were disengaged. First, an old notary of the village and his wife, who were about to sit down to dinner, when their neighbor ran in, much excited. He told them of his unexpected encounter, and of the honor which awaited him in receiving at his table the noble stranger and a talented professor of belles-lettres.

This news was followed by an invitation to come and dine with the great nobleman. M. Bidault (that was the name of the ex-notary) called his servant and said to her, —

"Marianne, take off the tablecloth, put the pie in the buffet, the chicken in the pantry, the fish in the cellar. We dine with my neighbor today; keep all that till tomorrow."

Madame Bidault hurried to her mirror, crying, —

"Marianne! bring me my orange-flower dress, my garden hat, my lace collarette. I cannot appear before those gentlemen in negligee. Monsieur Bidault, are you going to dress?"

"My faith! I will put on my maroon coat; that's all. See to it, Marianne, that the fish is kept fresh."

"Marianne, get me my dress."

Monsieur Chambertin went quickly on to continue his series of invitations; but he charged Monsieur and Madame Bidault not to be late. Poor Marianne was pressed on every side and did not know what to attend to first. She carried the garden hat to the cellar, and ran to her mistress with the dish of fish in her hand.

At last, after twenty minutes spent in running for monsieur and for madame, the couple were in a state to present themselves before the illustrious stranger. M. Bidault, who had composed verses since he sold out his office, anticipated much pleasure in talking over poetry with a man of letters; while Madame Bidault, who prided herself on knowing good form better than anyone in the neighborhood, was enchanted at the prospect of showing her savoir vivre to a great nobleman.

Upon leaving M. Bidault, M. Chambertin hurried to the mayor; but he was in the fields, where he had gone to overlook his workers, and would not return until the evening. Chambertin next went to the recorder who had succeeded M. Bidault; but the recorder had gone hunting, and his wife was making preserves, which she could not leave

There was not much time. Chambertin sought

a retired apothecary from Lyons who had bought a rather pretty place in Allevard. This was not a very distinguished personage to introduce to a palatine, but there was little time to choose, and he had much to do. Fortunately, M. Fondant talked very little, and would not be foolish.

Chambertin found him at last. He had not much time for explanations, and said hurriedly,—

"My dear Fondant, I am entertaining a great palatine of Poland; I am giving him a dinner. Come! We expect you. We dine in half an hour. Also a man of letters, who is a Hellenist incognito! Hurry! hurry! They are persons of the very highest class. Don't keep us waiting."

Chambertin went on. He thought perhaps he could find his friend Frossard, the ironmaster, one of the richest property owners in the district. He hastened to him. The great manufacturer was in the midst of his dinner. He had already eaten soup and beef when Chambertin, all in a perspiration, ran into the dining-room. He began to shout before he entered, "Stop, Frossard, stop! Not a morsel more!"

"What do you mean?" cried the ironmaster, holding his carving-knife aloft over a fat pullet, which he was about to carve. "Not a morsel more! I have good hopes of getting away with the legs and the wings, and I shall not leave the carcass."

"Stop, friend, I tell you. You must come and dine with me."

"Not today. You see it is too late."

"You must."

"I have already eaten a third of my dinner."

"That doesn't count."

"I am afraid it does."

"I have two gentlemen with me, one of whom is a man of letters."

"What do I care about that?"

"From Poland, from Cracovia, — a baron, a savant!"

"Well! What more? That is not enough to keep me from finishing my dinner."

"I offer you the honor of dining with them."

"Friend, if I dine well, I don't care whether it is with a baron or with a miller."

"Oh, come on, Frossard, old fellow. Be a little elevated in your ideas."

"My chicken will get cold."

"You will have at my dinner a delicious larded hare; and I have a paté de foie gras, which is just arrived from Strasburg."

"Ah, you tempt me."

"We will drink some of my old Pommard, and the Saint-Péray, that you are so fond of."

"I am afraid I cannot resist."

"You will follow me?"

"Yes; but it's not for your savants and noblemen, for I care nothing about them. It is on account of the hare and Pommard, for I am well acquainted with them."

M. Fondant was the first to arrive at the Chambertins'. He was naturally timid, and was much embarrassed at the idea of appearing before two strangers whom he supposed to be princes, from the few words his neighbor had let fall. The retired apothecary, therefore, remained in the antechamber which led into the salon where Madame Chambertin chatted with her new friends. He did not have the courage to enter alone, and so waited until the other guests arrived, so that he could slip in behind them.

Monsieur and Madame Bidault came next, and with them the big Frossard. M. Chambertin had been giving some orders to his cook, and hurried to meet his guests. They found M. Fondant still in the antechamber. M. Chambertin opened the door of the salon and presented Madame Bidault to his excellency, the Baron. While the exchange of courtesies went on between the Bidaults and our travellers, the big Frossard, who cared nothing for ceremony, pushed M. Fondant into the salon, although he seemed to prefer the antechamber. Madame Chambertin, having done the honors for the guests, disappeared to make some changes in her toilet.

"Your excellency," said Chambertin to the Baron, "I have gathered some friends who, like me, are delighted at the honor — "

"My faith!" cried Frossard, throwing himself upon a divan, and cutting Chambertin short.

"You came just in time, old fellow; if I had begun on the pullet I would not have left it."

"This dear Frossard is always joking," exclaimed M. Bidault, slapping the ironmaster on the back while his wife sat up very stiff in an armchair opposite Dubourg, who rested negligently upon a couch, like a sultan contemplating his slaves. Ménard was seated at a little distance, admiring the fine health of the ironmaster and the respectful manner of M. Fondant, who was seated beside a window in such fashion that the greater part of him was hidden by the curtain.

"If I had only had more time, Baron," said Chambertin, "I would have arranged a little musical soirée, a little fête; but I flatter myself I shall be better prepared another time."

"O, Monsieur de Chambertin, you fill me with confusion! Indeed, I feel as if I could no longer quit this country; and yet you know, M. Ménard, they expect us at the court of Bulgaria."

At these words Madame Bidault sat more erect, and bit her lips. Chambertin looked at his neighbors, as much as to say, "What did I tell you?" and M. Fondant disappeared entirely behind the curtains.

"Indeed," Dubourg went on, "this country pleases me exceedingly, and the charming people I have met here attach me to it still more."

At this compliment everyone arose and bowed. There was a similar movement behind the curtain.

"But I saw M. Fondant," said the ironmaster. "What the devil has become of him?"

"I am here, monsieur," said the retired apothecary, in a voice a trifle hoarse, as he freed his head a little from the draperies about him.

"What are you doing there, a league from us? Come nearer, Monsieur Fondant. What is the news from Lyons? What are they talking about there?"

M. Fondant turned red to his ears. He saw that the strangers were looking at him. He drew out his handkerchief, wiped his lips, moved his chair backward and forward, and at last managed to stammer, speaking through his nose to give himself more assurance,—

"How warm it is today!"

Happily, Madame Chambertin returned, and her presence gave more life to the conversation. She had put on a light muslin waist trimmed with lace. Her hair was carefully dressed, and this was not becoming to her; but she had brilliants in her ears and a superb collar of fine pearls about her neck, which made her very fascinating in Dubourg's eyes. He went forward to meet her, and taking her hand pressed her fingers tenderly. She responded by a half-smile, and rendered this more effective by a stifled sigh.

M. Bidault approached M. Ménard, whom he supposed to be the man of letters, and touched lightly upon some quotations from the "Parfait

Notaire," following them with several stanzas from "l'Almanach des Muses." M. Ménard, who wished to imitate Dubourg, and frequently assumed his pompous tone, smiled at M. Bidault with a patronizing air, and replied, "Studia adolescentiam alunt, senectutem oblectant." M. Bidault, who had forgotten Seneca when he learned the five codes, responded by offering M. Ménard a pinch of snuff.

Lunel, who had slipped on a little English jacket, in which he looked very much like a snail, came in to announce that dinner was served.

Everybody rose, Dubourg gave his hand to Madame Chambertin, M. Frossard took that of Madame Bidault, the others followed, and M. Fondant closed the procession.

They reached a very beautiful dining-room. The table was set with a sumptuous elegance, and Ménard observed with satisfaction that there were four hors-d'œuvre, which always foretell a well-ordered dinner. His excellency, the Baron, was placed between Madame Bidault and Madame Chambertin. Dubourg turned oftenest toward his hostess, and the vivid red which colored her cheeks occasionally might have caused the suspicion that the illustrious guest said something to her under the table!

Ménard was between Bidault and M. Fondant. The one plied him now and again with light verses; while the other was content to pour wine

for the savant, with the result that Ménard turned more frequently to the side of the apothecary than to that of the retired notary.

At the second course Dubourg became very lively, because he had flavored his dinner with his host's Pommard. He began to talk at random of his castles, his lands, of Poland and of Brittany. He mixed the customs of Rennes with the habits of Cracovia, and the productions of his country with the snows of the Krapach Mountains. But the company, full of astonishment at what he said, was content to open its eyes and ears.

The big Frossard found the Baron to his taste because he drained his glass, and considered Ménard a distinguished savant because of the deliberate way in which he disposed of each dish. M. Bidault was enchanted to find an occasion to pose as a poet; while his wife believed herself a beauty, for Dubourg told her she had the air of Mademoiselle de Scudéri. M. Fondant was more at his ease, since no one paid any attention to him. M. Chambertin was intoxicated with joy, thinking he had a great nobleman at his table; and Madame Chambertin ogled a little, because the great nobleman had knocked knees with her very frequently under the table.

Toward nine o'clock the guests endeavored to leave the table. Everyone had tried to keep pace with his excellency, the Baron; some from politeness and some from taste. The result was

that no one was steady on his legs. The ladies alone preserved their equilibrium, for it is rarely that ladies lose their heads at the table.

In the midst of the fumes of Bacchus, Dubourg preserved enough presence of mind to realize that they were six leagues from Grenoble, and that it was time for them to return. M. Chambertin offered beds to his guests, but if they stayed, much would be expected of them. M. Bidault and the iron manufacturer were at cards, and although Dubourg could scarcely resist the attraction of the game, he knew he would cut a very small figure without money. It would be better to go now and return some other time. M. Frossard had challenged him to tric-trac, a game at which Dubourg considered himself very strong; and he hoped to win back from the stout ironmaster a part of what he had lost with those rascals at Lyons.

Ménard found himself so comfortable that he would have gladly gone to bed where he was, and Madame Chambertin may have had her reasons for wishing to detain the young palatine; but Dubourg had also his reasons for not yielding. M. Chambertin, seeing that his solicitations were useless, ordered Lunel to get the carriage ready and take the Baron and his companion home.

Dubourg said good-night to his hosts and promised to return again very soon and pass several days with them. This promise soothed the anguish of his departure.

"Remember, your excellency, I count upon your word," said M. Chambertin, bowing profoundly to Dubourg.

"We shall be looking for you," added madame, launching a glance at him which spoke volumes.

Dubourg responded by pressing his boot upon her husband's shoe, which he took for madame's. He squeezed his host's hand affectionately, and called him, "My dear friend de Chambertin."

But Lunel and the cabriolet were waiting. Dubourg and Ménard entered, and took the road to Grenoble.

The movement of the carriage put Ménard to sleep, and Dubourg, having no one to talk to, chatted away to himself.

"This acquaintance will be very agreeable to me, and will vary a little the monotony of our stay at Grenoble. These good people believe me a nobleman. Well, there's no great harm in that. I'm sure I can act like one. Madame Chambertin has such a lively glance! Her husband has excellent wine and a good table. This big manufacturer is as rich as Crœsus, and it appears that he loves to play. Zounds! If I only had the money! What a chance to regain our losses! I'm sure he knows nothing about tric-trac. A man like that could lose five or six thousand francs without thinking about it. What in the world is Frederic doing? He leaves us without

a penny! I've got to find out what he's up to. I'll have to watch him, for poor Ménard never dares to say a word. The Count has given him a pretty guardian!"

They arrived at Grenoble very late, Ménard waking up to get out of the carriage. When Dubourg saw old Lunel before him, cap in hand, he felt instinctively in his waistcoat pocket; but he found nothing there, nor in any other pocket. Lunel was waiting for the coin, and Dubourg passed his hand under his chin, gave him a little tap on the cheek and said, —

"Very good, Lunel; adieu, my friend. I am very grateful to you."

The old jockey turned away at that, and grumbled all the way home, "That's a nice kind of a fee, — the Polish!"

CHAPTER XIV

The Visit to the Wood

When Dubourg and Ménard awakened on the morning after their dinner at Allevard, Frederic had long been gone. Dubourg said —

"We must really wait for Frederic this evening, and have a talk with him."

"Yes, Monsieur le Baron," answered the old tutor, "you will speak to him."

But we have seen that Frederic, on this particular evening, remained so late with Sister Anne that he finally decided not to return to the inn at all that night. It was four leagues from Vizille to Grenoble; the horse, which Frederic had taken in the morning at haphazard, went no better in the evening for having rested all day, because the horses at an inn are rarely fit to ride. It happened, therefore, that the animal was sometimes three hours in making the journey from Vizille, and Frederic did not hurry him as he had done in the morning, because it was no longer a question of reaching Sister Anne.

So Frederic was in the habit of returning very late at night, and Dubourg, after playing his usual game of piquet with Ménard, which was

the only game the retired preceptor ever indulged in, ended by going to sleep over the cards. As neither of the gentlemen had any money, they could win only the triumph of success, and as this was not sufficient to excite them the game never became heated. M. Ménard had constant access to the snuffbox of the King of Prussia, and he took a pinch frequently to make himself feel like Frederick II.

Dubourg yawned, so Ménard proposed to the Baron that they should go to bed, and postpone till next day their interview with Frederic. But the next day ran its course like the previous one. Several days passed in this way. Dubourg's impatience increased. He was eager to return to Allevard, to pursue his conquest and to try a game with the ironmaster. On his side, M. Ménard asked nothing better than to drink Pommard again with M. Chambertin, and to sit beside M. Fondant, who poured so well.

But they could not go to Allevard on foot. They must go in a style that would carry out the idea they had given of their rank; and they must have money enough in their pockets to make a figure at cards. M. Ménard could not see why that was so necessary; but, since the Baron considered it indispensable, he felt that he must be of the same opinion.

"We must see Frederic."

"Zounds!" said Dubourg. "We will wait until

this evening, and if necessary we will drink punch all night to keep awake. What do you think of that, Monsieur Ménard?"

"I think it would be an excellent idea, Baron, provided that we can have a cake to eat with the punch."

"We will have four of them," rejoined Dubourg, "we will play for them at piquet, and Frederic shall pay the bill."

Night came. An enormous bowl of punch was brought and a plate piled with cakes. These gentlemen began their games, drinking punch as they played, and they drank so often in order to keep awake that on the contrary they went to sleep very much sooner than usual. After they had each drunk nearly half a bowl of punch and swallowed half a dozen tarts and cakes, they fell with their heads on the table, Dubourg saying, —

"I am dead beaten."

And Ménard adding, —

"So am I, Baron."

They woke at daybreak, greatly disappointed to find that they had slept. But at least they could catch Frederic before he went out, and have their talk with him. They went to his room. Dubourg shouted and knocked, but no one answered. He went down to the yard and inquired for his friend.

"He did not return last night," replied the hostler.

"Did not return!" cried Dubourg. "Are you sure of that?"

"Oh, yes, monsieur; neither he nor the horse has come back."

"The devil!" exclaimed Dubourg. "That's bad. He's not been back since yesterday. That's very singular."

He returned to M. Ménard with this news. The tutor reflected for a few minutes and then said,—

"What do you think about it, Baron?"

"But, great Heavens, I asked you, Monsieur Ménard."

"I dare not decide, Baron; that is my opinion."

"It is very similar to that of Brid'oison."

They passed the day watching for Frederic, but he did not return. Dubourg was anxious about his friend, Ménard trembled for his pupil, and the innkeeper would have been disturbed over his horse had he not had the carriage of the travellers as security.

The next day at dawn Dubourg presented himself to Ménard with his hat on and said, "Come, let us find Frederic."

"Let us find him, Baron."

"To find him, we must look for him."

"So I have thought, Baron."

"That did not keep you from resting very comfortably in your bed."

"I wanted to see what you would advise."

"My advice is that we start immediately. Our friend has a face and figure so unusual that many people must have noticed him as he passed by. He cannot be lost."

"I hope so! For what in the world would the Count, his father, say?"

"Get up now and come with me."

Ménard dressed, ate his breakfast and followed Dubourg. The Baron had ordered two old work-horses to be saddled. The innkeeper consented to this very unwillingly, for the expenses of these gentlemen began to mount up to more than the value of their carriage. Presently they were both on horseback. Ménard vowed to his companion that he could not go faster than a walk, and Dubourg replied that an expedition like that in which they were engaged did not require speed.

They inquired, before leaving the inn, in what direction Frederic had gone. This was told them. All along the road people had noticed the young traveller who passed each morning urging his horse to a gallop, and came back in the evening at a quiet pace. Dubourg and his companion became tolerably certain that Frederic passed his days at Vizille.

"What is he doing there?" asked Dubourg.

"He must have found some interesting scenery."

"I should be rather inclined to think it was an interesting face."

"What, Baron! Do you think —"

"Yes, without doubt; for Frederic is not foolish enough to stand gazing at trees and mountains. He was looking for a heart that would sympathize with him, a soul as tender as his own; in fact, a woman who would please him. How do you know that he has not found some young peasant, sweet and naïve, who has turned his head?"

"I wager he has gone to study the Chartreuse."

"Monsieur Ménard, you forget that Frederic is only twenty-one."

"But, Baron, don't you remember that women have always deceived him, and that he fled from Paris to escape them?"

"Is that any reason why he should not fall in love? Besides, Monsieur Ménard, if you run away from anything, it shows that you are afraid you will not be able to resist it very long."

"Well, Baron, when Joseph fled from Potiphar's wife, it was not because he was afraid of yielding."

"Monsieur Ménard, Joseph ended by falling in love, because his posterity peopled the land of Canaan."

While they were disputing, the travellers had arrived at Vizille. They inquired about Frederic in the village, but learned nothing. The villagers were occupied with their work and had not noticed the young man; besides, he had dined only twice at the inn. We have seen that he preferred

to lunch on the provisions which Sister Anne brought into the wood. Many people had seen the young traveller, but they had not observed from which side he entered the village, nor what he did there.

Dubourg and his companion left the village without having gained much information.

"All is lost!" cried Ménard from time to time. "My pupil has been eaten by wolves, or killed by robbers, or he has fallen over some precipice while he watched the setting sun. Poor Frederic! So sweet, so gentle, so clever! There is nothing left for me to do but to weep for you, —

"Qualis populea mœrens Philomela sub umbra.
Amissos queritur fœtus."

"No, Monsieur Ménard; Frederic has neither been killed nor eaten. It is not a question of resembling Philomela bewailing her little ones, but we must find out whither the young man has betaken himself. Look! look! There is an animal that I think can give us some news."

When the travellers had left the village they had gone down into the valley, and they had now reached the edge of the wood. Frederic's horse was loose and wandering at will, in the paths leading through the valley.

"It is his horse," said Ménard. "I recognize it, by that white mark, for a horse I have seen in the inn yard. It is Frederic's horse. And it is alone, without a rider, — new proof, Baron, that

the young man is the victim of his imprudence. The horse has thrown his master to the earth! My pupil is dead! He wanted to cross the mountains — nox erat! He could no longer see his path! All is lost!"

"On the contrary, I believe Frederic is in this wood, and that he has left his horse, to walk about at his ease. Let us do all we can to find him; but we will be more careful than he, and fasten our horses to one of the trees."

Dubourg and his companion dismounted, and entered the wood. M. Ménard kept his handkerchief to his eyes, because he expected to see Frederic, wounded or bleeding, at any moment. Dubourg went on ahead and looked attentively on every side.

Presently he turned to Ménard with a joyous air and pointed to a little elevation of sward.

"Wait," he said; "see if my premonitions deceived me. There is the wonder Frederic has been studying."

M. Ménard followed the direction of Dubourg's finger and saw his pupil stretched carelessly on the grass, in a thick shade, and holding in his arms a charming young girl. Her head was lying on the breast of her lover and her two arms were around his neck.

"You are right, Baron," said Ménard, after a moment of surprise; "it is not the Chartreuse. This is more modern."

Her head was lying on her lover's breast, and her arms were

Copyright 1902, by The Frederick Stokes Company

"I think the young girl is charming."

"And I also, Baron."

"Oh, but Frederic is a scamp! It's not so stupid of him to find this pretty creature in such a desert place. Do you still think he is running away from women?"

"It doesn't look like it at this moment."

"Come on, Monsieur Ménard; Frederic may be sentimental, but he is a man like any other. We must say good-day to him."

"I am afraid that you will disturb him, Baron."

"By the Lord, if he spends his days here he will have plenty of time to make love!"

Dubourg and Ménard went forward. At the sound of their footsteps Frederic turned, and saw them. The maiden lifted her eyes, and on seeing the two strangers pressed more closely against Frederic, and, hiding her face on her lover's shoulder, seemed to defy all dangers from this vantage-ground.

"Bravo, my dear Frederic! bravo!" cried Dubourg. "I know now why you rise so early in the morning. Indeed, your conquest is charming. She is a little timid just now, but that adds a touch of the piquant to her face."

The young mute looked at Dubourg a moment and then turned her eyes upon Frederic, as if to ask him what it all meant.

Frederic rose; the girl rose also. She clung to him closely, looking suspiciously at the strangers,

as if she feared they would take her lover away from her. Frederic reassured her. He embraced her tenderly and begged her to go and wait for him in the cottage garden. Sister Anne could hardly consent to obey him. She was afraid to leave him, but Frederic promised again to rejoin her immediately. The hand of the young girl pointed to the strangers, and her eyes said, "You will not go away with them."

He embraced her again. At length she became more calm and went away, but she turned her head many times to look at Frederic with love, and at the newcomers with distress and anxiety.

"Very pretty! very pretty!" exclaimed Dubourg, following her with his eyes.

Ménard murmured between his teeth, "If her voice is like her plumage, she is a phœnix of all the hosts of this wood."

"What are you looking for here, gentlemen?" asked Frederic, approaching the two with a little irritation.

"What are we looking for? Why, you, of course,— you, who have abandoned us, who left us in an inn without money, while you ran off to the woods to make love to a little peasant girl. She is very pretty, I grant, but she ought not to make you forget your friend and your honored tutor."

Frederic said nothing, but seemed to be thinking deeply.

"Monsieur, Count," said Ménard, advancing

towards Frederic, "it is certainly right for every man to fall in love. Adam did with Eve — it is true he had no chance to do so with others. Abraham was smitten with Hagar, David with Bathsheba, Samson with Delilah; and if a strong man like Samson yielded, how can any of us resist, for we are not like Samson? But at the same time, est modus in rebus; because we have a new attachment we need not forget all our duties and responsibilities, and descend from the rank in which Fate has placed us. Besides, the Count, your father, did not send you out to travel expecting you would take to the woods and live like a savage. Whence I conclude — "

Frederic came out of his reverie suddenly, and did not seem to have heard his tutor's homily.

"Dear Ménard," he said, "I have something important to say to my friend the Baron. I must speak to him alone. Will you take a little turn in the valley yonder? We will join you soon."

"Count, I can refuse you nothing. I will go and wait for you with confidence."

Ménard left the woods, saying to himself, "My little lecture has done its work. The young man feels that he has been wrong, and wishes to reform and come back like the prodigal son, with a white stick in one hand and the bridle of his horse in the other."

Ménard had scarcely disappeared when Frederic ran towards Dubourg.

"Why have you brought our mentor here? Why did you follow me to the wood? Am I not master of my own actions?"

"First, the mentor is not very dreadful; second, we wanted to know what had become of you; for you sent us no word, and how was I to suspect that for the sake of a little love affair you would live like Mad Roland?"

"A little love affair? No, Dubourg; it is a true passion, and is eternal! I have never loved anyone with such ardor. I have found none so worthy of love. Ah, Dubourg, if you knew the heart of this sweet child! She is a stranger to all the falseness of the world; her soul is as pure and beautiful as her features. Ah, dear friend, I shall never find a woman who will love me as she does; not in Paris, not in its most brilliant salons."

"Come, now; you are excited, and I see that it will be difficult to make you listen to reason. This young girl seemed to me very pretty. I hope she may be a rara avis; but what are you going to do? You certainly don't want to spend your life in the woods."

"Ah, I don't want to leave Sister Anne!"

"Very well; take Sister Anne with you; let her accompany us. We will make her a baroness, if you wish, for the sake of this poor Ménard,—I will agree to arrange all that if you will but leave these old firs; if you stay under them you will end by becoming an ourang-outang."

"I can't do that. This young girl has a good old woman in the cottage who has taken care of her from her infancy. She will not abandon her."

"Ah, then, you will have a whole family on your hands."

"Go, Dubourg; return to Grenoble with Ménard. I will follow you within a few days, but I cannot leave her now."

"Return to Grenoble? And do you think it is very amusing with your old tutor and without a penny to go anywhere?"

"Oh, I forgot. Take the pocketbook. Take it; do what you wish with it. I have a few louis. That will be enough for me."

"But, indeed, dear Frederic, you are foolish to live in the woods playing the sentimental lover with your little village girl."

"Oh, she is not like other women, if you only knew her — poor little thing! But no; I can say nothing to you; you do not understand my heart. Good-by, Dubourg!"

"You really wish it? Well, all right; I will take the money, and I will leave you. I know men. I have had more experience than you. In two weeks you will be tired of this kind of a life and you will come back to us."

"Yes, if Sister Anne will go with me."

"You will come without her; I am certain of that. Good-by! Make love at your ease. Make

love all day and all night, so that in a fortnight you will be sick of it."

Dubourg, having put the pocketbook in his pocket, went down rapidly into the valley, where he found M. Ménard sitting tranquilly near the horses.

"Quick!" he cried to him joyously. "Quick! To horse!"

"What! To horse? But I do not see the Count."

"He has remained with his charmer."

"He stays here, and we go?"

"Doubtless, for we have no love affairs in the wood, and we should get very sick of it."

"But, Baron, I don't understand it."

"Monsieur Ménard, I am acting as a man who knows the human heart, and especially that of young people. If we had refused to do what Frederic wished, he would have been capable of committing all sorts of follies; and, instead of that, we will leave him free to follow his fancy. I guarantee that in two weeks at the latest his love will be satisfied. He will be calm, and his reason will return. There never was a passion that could stand a tête-à-tête for three consecutive weeks. Love is a fire which burns itself out, because it is never reasonable enough to preserve its forces."

"My faith, Baron! I begin to think you are right."

"Come on; to horse, Monsieur Ménard, and long live gayety! Tomorrow I will take you to dine with our friend de Chambertin."

"Truly, Baron?"

"And I promise you we will enter the village in a fashion that will create a sensation."

"I do not see how, Baron; but you arrange everything so admirably that I have great faith in your powers."

The hope of going to dine with M. Chambertin the next day made Ménard very happy, and he spurred ahead for the first time in his life (in truth, it was only with his heels) and trotted along beside Dubourg.

"It is a pity," he said, as they went on, "that my pupil has formed this new acquaintance. A woman sometimes makes a man commit a great many follies. Cato has said that wisdom and reason are incompatible with the feminine intellect."

"Yes, M. Ménard; and Cato probably said that after he had experienced a disappointment in love."

"Saint Bernard vowed woman organum diaboli."

"But Confucius contends that the soul of woman is the masterpiece of creation."

"Juvenal says there is no one for whom vengeance is more attractive."

"That proves, M. Ménard, that women are like the gods."

"Well, then, Origen said, 'Woman is the key of sin.'"

"I had supposed, until now, that she was rather its serrure."

"Agnes Sorel deprived Charles VII of courage."

"But another woman gave it back to him."

"Joan of Naples strangled her husband."

"But Jeanne Hachette saved Beauvais."

"All things considered, Baron, I see that it balances very well."

Our two travellers went on towards Grenoble disputing about women. It is a discussion which could lead them far, and at the end they would know no more of the subject than when they began. A wise man has said that the variety in the heart of a woman is only to be compared to the grains of sand in the sea. He must have been exceedingly wise, this man, if he knew the number of grains of sand in the sea.

But let us return to Frederic.

He breathed more freely when he found that Dubourg had really gone, — when he heard the sound of the horses' feet which carried his friends away. Then, content like Crates, who cried "I am free!" when he had thrown all his money into the sea, Frederic believed himself more free, henceforth, to devote himself to his love for the young mute. As soon as he was sure that Dubourg and Ménard were gone, he returned in

great haste to the cottage. Frederic thought only of the present. He did not reason, but he was only twenty-one, and he was passionately in love.

Sister Anne was trembling in the garden. Marguerite was asleep, and the young girl could give herself up without restraint to the sentiments which animated her.

The presence of these two men who knew Frederic caused her a distress which each moment became more acute. It seemed to her now impossible to live without her lover. Love was life for this soul of fire, who, in the depths of the wood, had not learned to rule her passions. Her loving heart had flown forth to him who said, "I love you." But when Sister Anne gave herself to Frederic, it was forever. Frederic had brought her happiness. He had reanimated her soul, bruised by misfortune. When a woman sees that she can please, she is born again to life.

What would become of her at sixteen, if she were forced to renounce this new hope? Frederic was everything to her, and, up to this moment, love had seemed to her happiness upon earth. But there is no durable happiness, especially in love. Only a few days of felicity had rolled away, and the poor little girl had begun to feel the anguish which this great sentiment always carries in its train.

Presently Frederic reappeared. She did not run, she flew to his arms. Her eyes wandered

beyond him. He was alone, and she was the more happy.

"No," said her lover, while he embraced her, "I shall not leave you. Where shall I find such a pretty woman, one more faithful, more worthy of being loved? What does it matter to me what they say, and what do I care for a world where there is nothing to love? I find happiness here. No; my father himself could not make me renounce you."

A fresh kiss pressed upon the charming lips of the young girl sealed the engagement which he thus contracted. Night brought with its shadows still sweeter moments. They were alone in the world together. They belonged to each other, and, as Frederic felt her tender, caressing arms about his neck, he repeated again, "No, I will never leave you,—never!"

But at the end of a week the hours passed less quickly for the lover. The sweet caresses of the poor little mute were not enough to occupy all the time. He felt that he must have something to do, that it is impossible to dream always on the banks of a brook.

A week later he descended into the valley. He mounted the horse which he had kept, and made some little excursions in the neighborhood. At length he said to Sister Anne that he would go for some provisions, of which they were in need, although he had done without very well when he

was first in the wood. Another week elapsed, and he looked toward Grenoble. He was astonished that Dubourg had not come to inquire after him, and that Ménard had also forgotten him. I believe he was secretly a little hurt about it. Did he no longer love Sister Anne? Oh, Frederic loves her just the same. But time passes, and, as Dubourg said, there is no love strong enough to last through a tête-à-tête of three weeks.

But we will not anticipate. Leave him with his little mute, who loves him as much as the first day because — ah, Heaven, ask any woman why — and let us return to Dubourg, for he has again the funds of the travellers at his disposal.

CHAPTER XV

Fête, Dinner, Fireworks and Surprise

No sooner had they arrived at Grenoble than Dubourg called for dinner, and was served with the ordinary ménu.

"What sort of a dinner do you call this? We must have some other dishes, and some better wine than this is absolutely necessary!" exclaimed Dubourg, who was inclined to make a display and assert himself because he had plenty of money in his pocket.

Their host came upstairs and represented to these gentlemen that their account was already very large because — to say nothing of their lodgement and table — their young companion had foundered all the horses of the inn, in compelling them to undue speed on his daily journeys to and from Vizille.

As his only response to this representation, Dubourg drew from his pocket with a flourish a note for five hundred francs, which he handed to the landlord, saying to him, with the lordly indifference of a wealthy personage, —

"Here, my good fellow, you may pay yourself out of that!"

The landlord opened his eyes wide with astonishment; his nose, pinched with suspicion, became distended; his mouth, which he wished to make expressive of his gratification, fairly opened to the ears. He entangled himself in apologetic phrases, and finally ended by saying that he would go and reckon up his account. He hoped that the gentlemen would not leave him, and if it would be agreeable to them he would send them up some Muscat wine for dinner.

When he had gone M. Ménard, who had made a face almost as comical as that of the landlord, in his surprise, said, "Why, Baron, did you get your money from Poland?"

"Ah, surely, M. Ménard. Zounds! Do you think a man like me can be long without money?"

"But I did not see the courier who —"

"He probably came while you were asleep. The principal thing is that we can now present ourselves anywhere, without being obliged to stand around like two fools, and see the other people play, which is not the conduct of a noble. As a beginning, we will go tomorrow to visit our friend Chambertin, but it would be a good idea to send a messenger immediately, and tell him of our visit, so that he can make fitting preparations for us. What do you think of that, M. Ménard?"

"I believe it would not have a bad effect, Baron."

"In that case, hunt up a small boy, and put on him your flannel waistcoat and my morning-cap, so that he will have an English air. While you are doing this I will write the letter."

Ménard went in search of a small scullion who could easily be transformed into an English groom, and Dubourg devoted himself to the composition of the following letter: —

The Baron Ladislas Potoski, Palatine of Rava, etc., etc., etc., has the honor of informing his honorable friend, de Chambertin of Allevard, that he will visit him tomorrow at his château, accompanied by the savant Ménard. Baron Potoski kisses the hand of Madame de Chambertin of Allevard.

As soon as the note was finished it was given to the boy, who was disguised as a courier. Quickened by a coin of a hundred sous, he departed immediately to deliver it at the address.

M. and Madame Chambertin were just going to bed when the messenger reached them. It was half past nine in the evening, and in the country, when you study neither music, literature nor painting, nor cultivate your garden, the evenings seem long. M. Chambertin had played his violin, and madame had sung a new ballad; then they had spoken of the Polish baron, whom they despaired of seeing again. Monsieur had said, "It surprises me; he gave me his word that he would return." Madame sighed as she added, "It astonishes me even more than it does you."

The arrival of the messenger stopped M.

Chambertin just as he was about to thrust his leg into the marital couch. He paused, therefore, and waited, though his wife said to him, "Get into bed; our people are there to answer the bell."

"But who can it be so late?"

A knock at the chamber door was the response. Lunel announced through the keyhole, "A messenger from the Baron Potoski." At this name M. Chambertin, who still held his leg in the air, ready to thrust it into the bed, withdrew it in a flash, and losing his equilibrium rolled on the carpet. Madame Chambertin, at the mere name of the Baron, sat up suddenly and called aloud for a mirror to rearrange her hair.

Her husband arose, and ran for his dressing-gown, saying to Lunel, "I'm coming, Lunel. I'll be there immediately."

"Give it to me quick, monsieur!" cried Madame Chambertin; "I shall never have time enough!"

M. Chambertin, in his excitement, had not understood his wife, and handed her hastily a pitcher of water, which he spilled all over her. He then rushed to open the door to Lunel, who entered, followed by the jockey. Madame Chambertin was furious at her husband's awkwardness, and drew the curtains of the bed hurriedly together, that she might not be exposed to the curious eyes of the domestics.

M. Chambertin took the letter which was pre-

sented to him. He read on, and at each word his face became more radiant; he could scarcely contain himself, and cried out to his wife, —

"The Baron will come! He calls me Chambertin d'Allevard; and, wife, he kisses your hand, and all that."

He ran to draw back the curtains, stuck his nose into the water his wife handed him, and which he proceeded to spill again.

"Take care, monsieur! What are you doing?" she cried.

"Of Allevard, wife!" exclaimed Chambertin, seizing the pitcher of water, against which he had struck so disastrously, and promenading around the room with it in his hand.

"Of Allevard! It is as if I were a nobleman. Indeed, I am almost one, and, thanks to the Baron, I hope to be one altogether."

"Put it down, monsieur! Put down what you are carrying!" cried madame to her husband, who evidently did not know what he was doing. She then ordered Lunel to give the messenger refreshments, and to tell him that his master and M. Ménard would be received with the honors they merited.

When the courier had gone Chambertin threw himself into an arm-chair, and madame lay back on her pillows. But they were so excited by the letter they had received that they could no longer think of sleeping. M. Chambertin read it again.

"The Baron will come! He calls me Chambertin d' Allevard!"

PHOTOGRAVURE FROM ORIGINAL DRAWING BY W. GLACKENS.

The title "of Allevard" was especially flattering to him.

"It is the name of the village," said madame.

"Yes, but in writing it after my name in that way it sounds as if I were a noble."

"You know very well that they do that way in Paris. We have two neighbors who give themselves the name of their neighborhood, — M. Gérard de Villers-Cotterets and M. Lerous d'Ermenonville. Six months ago I told you you ought to call yourself Chambertin d'Allevard, but you would not listen to me."

"My dear, now that his excellency the Baron has given me this title, I surely will not drop it, and I shall sign myself so henceforth. Wife, tomorrow I shall give a fête."

"I hope so, monsieur."

"Dinner, ball, concert, fireworks! There has never been anything like it hereabouts. It will have an enormous effect. I shall invite all the best people in the neighborhood."

"I shall have my hair dressed à la Ferronière; that will be very becoming."

"I shall have the grounds lighted up."

"I shall wear my long train."

"With colored glass shades on — "

"A bodice of baby blue."

"Numerous lamps in the court — "

"My cherry slippers."

"The biggest we can find."

"A scarf."

"Garlands of flowers."

"My collar of pearls."

"We will have guns fired."

The landlord had reckoned his account so that just five hundred francs were coming to him, and he had therefore nothing to return to his excellency, the Baron. Anyone but Dubourg would have considered it a little dear to ask a hundred crowns because three or four wretched horses had been foundered, for they were not good enough to draw the plough; but the Baron could not trouble his head with accounts. He contented himself with asking the landlord to provide him with a pretty tilbury for the next day, and a couple of boys to represent his suite.

Dubourg investigated his funds and found himself the possessor of four thousand five hundred francs. It was more than was necessary to win ten times as much, and he cherished a hope that the ironmaster would return to him what the chevalier and the much-frilled count had stolen.

The next day toward noon Dubourg and Ménard made preparations to set out for Allevard, where they expected to arrive before dinner. As the landlord had not been able to find a tilbury in the town, the gentlemen had to be satisfied with a two-seated wagonette. Dubourg and Ménard took their places on the front seat, and back of them sat two little scullions, dressed out in vests

and trousers borrowed from different people, and wearing old hunting-caps, so big that they fell over their ears, which gave them a foreign air that was quite fascinating. Dubourg charged them especially to feign complete ignorance of French, and to communicate only by signs, so that they might pass for two little Poles. The two jockeys promised to obey.

They started, Dubourg driving; but, although he had insisted that the landlord should give him his two best horses, he could not force them into a gallop. He had to be content with a very moderate trot. Ménard was afraid that dinner would be over before they reached Allevard, and Dubourg was broken-hearted because he could not whirl suddenly, like a thunderbolt, into the presence of M. Chambertin.

It was half past five before the village of Allevard became visible. Dubourg sweat blood and water forcing his horses. At last they approached the house of M. Chambertin, before which a crowd was collected. Dubourg said to Ménard, —

"Poke them with your cane, so that we may at least drive up at a good trot."

As Ménard leaned forward to spur the coursers, quite an outcry arose.

"Here they are! Here they are!"

Four gunshots were fired, one after the other. Then two violins and a clarinet executed the overture of the "Caravan." The two horses, fright-

ened by the gunshots and the music, ran away, dragging the wagonette up a hill instead of following the road which led to M. Chambertin's house.

Dubourg cried from afar, —

"It is charming! It is delicious!"

Ménard was afraid that they would be overturned, and said, —

"Be careful, Baron; our horses are running away."

And M. Chambertin, who wished to have the grounds lighted in two hours, said to his guests, —

"See how cleverly my friend, the Baron, drives his carriage. He has purposely driven up the mountain to give us an example of his skill."

In returning down the mountain the horses rushed faster than ever, and at each instant the frail vehicle threatened to overturn, as it passed over the rocks or sank into the ruts. Ménard was trembling, the two jockeys shrieked, and Dubourg exclaimed, —

"Shut up, fools! You are forbidden to speak French. Don't be afraid; I'm responsible."

The carriage flew like the wind. It was fortunate that the horses turned toward the house; but, instead of entering the great gate, the coursers rushed furiously against the wall. The shock was so violent that Dubourg was hurled to the ground, while crying, "I'm responsible for all!" and the two jockeys rolled on the grass. Ménard only stuck fast in his seat. He seemed nailed there.

But no one was hurt. Dubourg rose smiling, and began to bow to the company. He assured them that this was the fashion in which he always alighted from his carriage in Poland. Ménard, proud of having kept his seat, pulled down his waistcoat as he entered. The two scullions followed, holding on to a certain part of their anatomy which had been bruised by the fall, and to which they pointed significantly when Lunel asked them if they were wounded.

Dubourg was given the most flattering reception. M. Chambertin was in heaven. The Baron had pressed his hand, calling him his dear friend. Madame de Chambertin was not less satisfied; the illustrious stranger had whispered in her ear, as he saluted her, —

"You have been in my thoughts every moment."

All the company seemed charmed to have met a great nobleman, who did not put on airs, and who made everyone feel at ease.

M. Chambertin had assembled about forty people, all the rich property owners of the district,— the mayor, the notary, the recorder, the iron manufacturer, some friends who had arrived from Paris and Lyons, in fact all whom he thought worthy of meeting his excellency, the Baron.

The dinner hour came. Dubourg had the place of honor beside madame, and M. Ménard was enchanted to find himself beside M. Fondant,

who, as usual, talked little, but was assiduous in pouring wine and passing the various dishes.

"I hope," said M. Chambertin, "that the Baron will remain some days with us, and M. Ménard also."

"Yes," replied Dubourg; "I have arranged to spend a little time in this delightful retreat, and so has my friend, M. Ménard."

These words were accompanied by a little touch on the knee of Madame de Chambertin, who devoured the wing of a chicken in order to stifle an indiscreet sigh. M. Ménard bowed and M. Chambertin continued: —

"I have only one regret, and that is, you have not brought your friend with you, — the Count of — the Count of — "

"Oh, he is so original!" said Dubourg. "He flies from society. I have left with him my coach and my suite, and have brought with me only these two little Poles."

"Ah, are they Poles? They are very pretty. I thought they were Cossacks."

At this moment Lunel came to tell Dubourg that his two jockeys were playing the devil in the kitchen, and would not answer a single question.

"Indeed, I am not surprised. They do not understand French."

"Let the Baron's people do as they please," said Chambertin, "and try to understand their signs."

"They make lovely signs!" replied Lunel, under his breath. "They do nothing but stick their fingers in the sauces, and point to their breeches."

The gayety of Dubourg and of the learned Ménard freed everyone from restraint. They laughed, they chatted, they ate and drank. But every time Dubourg spoke, M. Chambertin asked the company to be quiet, saying,—

"Listen to his excellency, the Baron."

At dessert M. Bidault was inclined to sing; but Dubourg had said that singing had gone out of fashion in good society, so that M. Chambertin silenced M. Bidault, crying, "It's not the thing to sing any more! What are you doing there?"

But the big Frossard had the habit of singing, and he did not care what Chambertin said; so he began. Chambertin could not prevent the vocal exercise, but he begged the company to pass into the concert hall, and hoped that the manufacturer's drinking-song would pass for a classical fragment of the concert.

They had ordered a piano and a harp. A matron and a young lady of the neighborhood entertained the company with an air with thirty-six variations. The mayor took his bass viol, the notary a violin; they gave Dubourg a horn, for he had said that he played every instrument. The Baron passed the instrument on to Ménard, remarking that he cared for none but the English

horn. The tutor looked at him with amazement, but he whispered under his breath, —

"Blow into it, and don't appear embarrassed."

M. Ménard had not been very moderate at dinner, and so was ready for anything. Taking the horn, he applied an opening to his lips, blowing, and rolling his eyes. They began a trio, to which Dubourg beat time. Whenever the horn came in there was silence, for though Ménard was blowing beautifully he had not found the mouth of the horn. But Dubourg appeared satisfied, and turned to the company, saying, —

"I have never heard such sweet playing! One would not believe it is a horn!"

Everyone applauded, and after the selection was finished Ménard said to himself, "I knew how to play the horn, and I never suspected it!"

The concert was ended at last. Dubourg spoke of cards, and presently the tables were arranged. Tric-trac was never played in the drawing-room, but Dubourg declared that they played nothing else at the court of Poland. M. Chambertin immediately ordered a tric-trac table brought in, and announced that before a week had passed he would have four in his salon. Dubourg and the big Frossard placed themselves at the table, and M. Chambertin watched them play, but he did not understand the game.

Dubourg was in a good vein. He pushed his adversary. He piqued him to play. He had

already won twenty louis, when a violent explosion was heard in the garden.

"It is the fireworks!" cried one and all, and the company ran into the garden.

"To the devil with the fireworks!" exclaimed Dubourg. "I had just got into a lucky streak."

He tried in vain to keep the manufacturer, who preferred to see the fireworks. Dubourg decided, therefore, to follow the example of the others.

He left the drawing-room. The fireworks were at the end of the garden. Dubourg met Madame Chambertin, who came to see what detained the Baron, and who perhaps sought an opportunity for a tête-à-tête. Dubourg took her on his arm. He was in an excellent humor. He recalled the conversation under the table, the suppressed sighs; he expected to pass some days in the mansion, and he ought to show himself worthy of the attention he had received; — for all these reasons he led madame through a path which did not run directly to the spot where the company were gathered.

Madame murmured from time to time, "Where are you taking me?"

But Dubourg replied, "I don't know. Let us go on."

They came presently to a little summer-house, built like a kiosk, which was not lighted, and had only one window, high above the floor. Dubourg

opened the door and pushed Madame Chambertin in. He entered with her and took care to close the door after him.

M. Chambertin was giving the fireworks especially for his friend, the Baron, and while the Bengal light was on he looked everywhere for him but could not see him. He ran all about in search of him, crying, "Where are you, Baron? Come, please come! Two pieces have already gone, and they are going to light the first transparency."

Dubourg, who was probably not interested in a transparency just then, heard M. Chambertin's voice, and called to him from within the kiosk,—

"I am here; I am very happy; don't trouble about me. Madame, your wife, is kindly explaining the fireworks to me."

"Ah, but I do not see you at the window."

"That is because madame is afraid of the sticks, but we see very well."

"Oh, so much the better. I am delighted that you are well pleased," said M. Chambertin, coming beneath the window. "I ordered the figures myself. Did you see the sun?"

"No, but I felt it. It was like the moon."

"See these little serpents. What a continual movement! That is pretty good — is it not?"

"It is superb!"

"Wife, explain the transparency to his excellency, the Baron."

"Oh, the Baron understands everything with

wonderful facility," replied madame, in a voice somewhat enfeebled by — smoke?

"Take care! There goes the bouquet!"

The bouquet went off in fact. They applauded. They cried bravo. The company returned enchanted, and madame came out of the kiosk with his excellency, the Baron.

"The bouquet was famous!" cried M. Chambertin, rubbing his hands together.

"I really was quite stunned by it," said madame, with a little tremble in her voice.

"It was worthy of the seigneur of the district!" exclaimed Dubourg.

"My faith!" replied M. Chambertin; "I think I am pretty nearly that."

"You are quite that, my dear friend. I will certify to that."

"When a man like you reassures me, Baron, I cannot doubt it."

But it was after eleven o'clock, and in the country this was very late. All those who lived in the neighborhood took their carriages. Those who lodged in the village went to light their lanterns, which their servants carried. They said good-night to M. and Madame Chambertin, and complimented them upon the beauty of the fête. All saluted his excellency the Baron with great respect and went home. Then M. Chambertin reflected that his illustrious friend had need of repose. He perceived that the savant, M. Mé-

nard, had dropped asleep in a corner of the drawing-room, and ordered the servants to show these gentlemen to their apartments.

They had prepared a beautiful suite on the first floor for the young nobleman, and a pleasant room on the second story for the savant. If poor Ménard had possessed no other title to respect than his reputed learning, he might have been sent to the garret; but everyone showed him marked attention because he was the friend of the Baron.

Each retired to his own apartment. M. Ménard soon snored like a happy man. This means that happy people do not have bad dreams.

Dubourg stretched himself with delight on a bed soft as down. It was hung with silken curtains, fringed and tasselled with silver. His thoughts ran on.

"My faith! It is very amusing to play the baron. Here is a mansion where they overwhelm me with attentions and kindness; they anticipate my slightest wishes — and all because they believe me a palatine. If I were to present myself quite simply as Monsieur Dubourg of Rennes, they would beg me to pass on; and yet a change of name has not made me a different person. But, indeed, all men have their element of folly, a little more or a little less. It would undoubtedly be noble to try to heal them, but this seems very difficult for me. I would rather humor their

mania, and thereby be more agreeable to them. This M. Chambertin is an idiot. He has been a wine merchant two-thirds of his life, and now he wishes to try to play the gentleman, and give himself airs of nobility for the remaining third. Why should I be troubled about his foolishness? He is perfectly enchanted to entertain a baron, so I will be Baron here as much as I please. His wife is very happy to have me pay court to her, so I will do so until I find someone that I like better; and it is probable that I shall not find anyone I like better while I stay in her house, because a coquettish woman on the shady side of forty never invites a pretty girl who — "

In the midst of his reflections Dubourg began to doze, and would soon have been sound asleep; but suddenly noise and confusion broke out in the court below. There were cries, oaths, and bursts of laughter. In the midst of the racket Dubourg thought he distinguished the voices of his jockeys. He rose hastily, slipped on the necessary clothing and opened the window looking on the court. He saw several servants gathered there. Old Lunel was fighting over a roast chicken with one of the little Poles, and the other one cried and screamed in a corner of the court.

The two little scullions, faithful to the command Dubourg had given them, had only responded by signs to the other domestics; but Lunel, who was at once butler, valet and jockey

to M. Chambertin, had taken a great dislike to the Baron's two servants as well as to the Baron himself. He could not forget that he had driven the Polish nobleman to Grenoble and had received no reward except a tap on the cheek.

The two little fellows had bruised their thighs in falling from the wagonette. That is why they pointed so frequently to their wounded part, in trying to make themselves understood. Lunel did not comprehend their gestures, and thought they were trying to insult him.

To revenge himself for his real or fancied injuries, Lunel had forced the poor boys to ascend to a small room in the garret, and left them there without any supper, and with no attention to their comfort.

The two scullions did not go to bed, thinking every minute that someone would bring their supper, which did not come; and they could not believe they were really to be left unprovided for. Tired of waiting, they crept from their room at last, to see what they could find. Everyone had gone to bed, but Lunel was watching, for he suspected that the jockeys would be up to some tricks.

The little rascals were very hungry. They caught the odor from the meat-safe in the kitchen, where the window was left open, entered easily, and, breaking through the screen door, took what they pleased. One seized a roast chicken, which

had not been touched, and the other the carcass of a hare, on which there was still good picking. Each fled with his dish, but Lunel had seen them. He yelled "Stop thief!" lashing at them with the whip he carried. The two rascals gained the window. As they jumped, one fell, and crushed his nose in his roast hare. The other, more fortunate, ran on with his chicken; but Lunel caught him and tried to tear it from him. Then a battle began.

The little jockey forgot his Polish and cried,—

"You shall not have it!"

Lunel replied, "Ah, you rascal! You can talk French now—can you? I'll teach you to make nasty signs to me!"

The little fellow who had fallen screamed between his sobs,—

"I've broken my nose! It's all the fault of that sneaking old man, who wouldn't give us any supper."

Just at that moment Dubourg appeared at his window. All the servants of the house had descended into the court, and M. Chambertin had emerged on his balcony in his dressing-gown.

"What does this noise mean?" said M. Chambertin.

"These are my little Poles."

"Yes, your Poles, who talk French now," replied Lunel. "*I* caught them stealing in the pantry."

"They didn't give us any supper," said the two children, "and he waited for us in a corner with his whip."

"A miracle!" cried Dubourg. "They have spoken! they understand! A whip seems to be the best instructor. Come, little fellows, come up! Let me hear you speak French, and you shall have some supper."

"And you, rascal!" cried M. Chambertin to his valet; "let me see you touch one of the Baron's Poles again, and I will chase you off with a stick!"

Lunel went off muttering, "They are Poles about as much as I am a Turk!" The two jockeys ascended to their master, with the roast chicken and the hare which they had saved from the fray. The servants of the Baron went to bed, and M. Chambertin prepared to do the same with his spouse, who dreamed that she was in the kiosk, and that someone shot off a huge fire-cracker.

Dubourg thought it was not safe to keep the little rascals near him any longer, as they might be guilty of more foolishness. The next morning, very early, he put a crown into the hands of each and started them off to Grenoble, to the great content of Lunel, who did not love the Poles.

The days following slipped away very peaceably and pleasantly. A few friends only came to share the pleasure of M. Chambertin, and to listen to the tales which it pleased Dubourg to

tell about his castles, his lands, his family and his functions at the court of Poland. M. Ménard did not say much, but he ate and drank well, and cited here and there a Latin author; then the guests who did not understand looked at one another with added respect.

Dubourg got his card party together every evening, but they played for very small sums. The big Frossard was absent, and M. Chambertin never became excited over play. Dubourg began to believe he would not double his capital.

But M. Chambertin's fête approached, and on this occasion everything in the mansion must put on new life. Some very wealthy friends were expected from Paris, who were invited in honor of the Baron. Madame Chambertin had written them to come, for she wished to do everything to retain the Baron, and she repeated daily to her husband, —

"You do not know the honor M. Potoski does us in staying with us. You cannot divine it."

M. Chambertin replied, "I assure you, my dear, I am very proud of it, and I will do everything to keep him."

"Ah, you do well, monsieur, for his departure will cause a great void in my life. He is a man very difficult to replace. He is noble to the ends of his fingers."

There was great activity in M. Chambertin's mansion, for unusual preparations were going on

for the magnificent new fête. Everybody understood that the hero of it would again be the handsome stranger. M. Chambertin endeavored to surpass himself. He had sent for workmen, who began to labor mysteriously in the garden; and they always directed their energies to the side near the kiosk, where it was evident he was preparing some surprise for his guests. His last fireworks had been talked about for six leagues around, and he intended that the next should be reflected as far as Lyons.

The great day had come. A numerous company had assembled at M. Chambertin's house. He was enchanted with the surprise he had planned for the Baron, and he did not even let his wife into the secret. A few new people had come to augment the circle about the retired wine merchant. A delicious repast was served; the dishes were delicate, the wines the finest. Dubourg almost did the honors of the table himself; for in calling his host "my friend of Allevard" he completely turned his head, and Chambertin mentally put himself and his fortune at the Baron's command. Dubourg then gave his attention to madame. He said to her in a very tender aside, —

"Twice happy was the day I first met you!"

Madame responded, smiling, —

"What did you say? 'Twice'? Oh, that is not enough: it should be three times, four, five, six times, I should say."

"We will put it at seven," said Dubourg, "and stop there."

The dinner ended. M. Chambertin had only one regret, — that his friend Durosey had not arrived from Paris. He had been expected for several days, but had not appeared.

Every time he heard the name of the friend Durosey mentioned, Dubourg said to himself, "I knew someone of that name in Paris, but where the devil did I meet him?"

He finally asked M. Chambertin where his friend Durosey lived in Paris, and what was his business. Chambertin replied, "He is a great merchant who has retired with an income of twenty thousand livres."

"Well, then," said Dubourg to himself, much relieved, "it is not the one I knew, for I was not in the habit of visiting great merchants."

They passed into the drawing-room, where a rich property owner, a great lover of écarté, was about to propose a game with the Baron, when Lunel came to tell his master that M. Durosey had just arrived. M. Chambertin was delighted. He hurried out and soon returned, bringing his friend, whom he presented to the company. Dubourg looked at the newcomer and recognized a Parisian restaurant keeper, whose place he had frequented for a long time. He owed him an account of four hundred francs, which he had not been able to pay for the last two years, but

which had been again and again presented. M. Chambertin had been expecting a great dealer in beefsteaks, but he was extremely careful not to announce him as a retired restaurant keeper.

The meeting was very disagreeable to Dubourg, but he did not lose his head; and when M. Chambertin approached with Durosey, to whom he said, "Here is his excellency, the Baron de Potoski, Polish palatine," Dubourg saluted him smiling. He thought that by blinking his eyes, twisting his mouth and making various grimaces he would so alter his looks that his creditor would not recognize him.

M. Durosey did not pause before Dubourg. The young man gradually became more at ease, and devoted himself to the game with greater calm. But from time to time he glanced about the salon, and when he met the eyes of the former restaurateur, he believed that the creditor examined him with especial keenness. Dubourg then returned to his mouthings and grimacing, for which he had a knack, twisting his nose and mouth continually toward his left ear.

The presence of the creditor disturbed Dubourg greatly. He was confused, annoyed; he lost his head, and his money began gradually to pass to the side of his adversary. Dubourg ventured to double and triple the risks, the wealthy property owner wishing to refuse the Baron nothing.

Quite a group gathered about the table, on which were several bills for five hundred francs, and M. Durosey placed himself just opposite Dubourg. The Baron could not lift his eyes without seeing his creditor, and, to complete his misery, luck was always against him. In half an hour his travelling fund passed to other hands, and Dubourg rose, announcing that he must go and get more money.

He went in search of his friend Chambertin, intending to borrow some thousand francs, which he hoped would win back what he had lost; for with a gambler, as long as there is life there is hope. The restaurant keeper had not lost sight of Dubourg for a moment. He followed him and caught him in the embrasure of a window, so that the Baron could not avoid him.

"And how is M. Dubourg?" he asked, with an impertinent air.

"Dubourg! What do you mean by Dubourg?" replied the false baron, making his nose and mouth work faster than ever.

"Oh, I had no trouble in recognizing monsieur," replied the creditor in a louder tone; "but I did not know he was a Polish baron."

"Ah, silence, dear M. Durosey!" said Dubourg, who saw that it was not possible to deceive the restaurateur. "I did not recognize you at first, but now I recall you perfectly. I am enchanted to see you again."

"And I am delighted to see you, monsieur. You seem to have plenty of money now. You can bet five hundred francs at écarté, so I hope you will pay me the four hundred that has been running so long."

"Yes, yes; with the greatest pleasure. I will give it to you this evening. When I left Paris I quite forgot this little matter."

"But I sent to you twenty times, monsieur, when you lived on the fifth floor, in the Rue d'Enfer, and also — "

"Oh, I know all that. Silence, Monsieur Durosey! Since that time I have come into my property — into my titles. I shall pay you in a moment."

"Oh, then, you can count on it, Baron, of course this will remain between ourselves."

Dubourg left Durosey, and was about to go in search of M. Chambertin, when he entered the salon, exclaiming, —

"To the garden, everybody! They are going to set off the fireworks!"

Dubourg approached his host and said to him, "I have a favor to ask of you."

"After the fireworks, Baron, I will do anything you wish; but I want you to go to the kiosk now. I flatter myself you will see from there just as well as you did last time. Madame will conduct you."

M. Chambertin went off with an air which

indicated that there was something in the wind, and Dubourg said to himself, "Zounds! That's pleasant of him, — to send me to the kiosk with his wife."

He descended to the garden and found Madame Chambertin, who was waiting, happy in recalling to herself the last fireworks. She asked nothing better than to witness the second display with him, from the little kiosk, where the view was so admirable. One could sit there so comfortably, too; and that was quite important, as she had asked her husband to provide quite a long series of pieces.

The rockets went off, the girandoles and the transparencies; but when they came to the bouquet, M. Chambertin said to the guests assembled in the garden, —

"Turn toward the kiosk and look well at what you see there; this is the surprise."

Everyone turned toward the kiosk. M. Chambertin gave the signal; the walls of the pavilion fell as by enchantment. The roof stood upon four columns only, and four cressets placed in the interior were lighted swiftly by a fire-train, and illumined a transparency on which were the words, "De Chambertin's tribute to the Baron Potoski."

This was the surprise on which M. Chambertin had worked for many days with secret hopes and great expectations. But he little dreamed of the surprise which his friend the Baron reserved for

him. The fire-crackers, the rockets, the destruction of the kiosk, had been so promptly concluded that the couple within had not been given time to finish their conversation; and it seemed very lively indeed to the assembled company.

The men laughed, the women bit their lips in order not to do so. Ménard, who was behind the crowd and could see nothing, cried, "Will someone explain to me the transparency?" and M. Chambertin was in a state of stupefaction.

All this occurred in an instant. It took no longer for Dubourg to see what remained for him to do. He had not a sou, and a creditor had found him; he had no hope from his friend Chambertin, who would either thrash him or challenge him to a duel;—it was important, therefore, to leave the place as soon as possible.

The cressets were extinguished. Madame Chambertin had fainted, which was the best thing she could do. Dubourg took advantage of the smoke which had replaced the lights, leaped into the garden and mingled with the crowd which surrounded the kiosk. He darted into a side path, and warned Ménard, who ran after him immediately, that if he uttered a sound he would beat him.

At the end of this pathway was a little door which gave an outlet from the grounds. Dubourg opened it and pushed Ménard out. The tutor did not know what had happened, and

imagined that perhaps M. Chambertin's house was on fire. Dubourg closed the little gate, threw the key into the field and hastened on into the country.

"Let us go on," he said to his companion, "at a double-quick pace! As fast as we can! We have drunk from the cup of pleasure, and now we must follow a stricter rule. That will be good for us. This is the sentiment that fits us now: 'Non est beatus qui cupida possidet, sed qui negata non cupit.'"

"Amen," replied Ménard, as he trotted along beside Dubourg.

CHAPTER XVI

The Impromptu Comedians. Events Which are Startling

The two companions had run for almost a league as though they were pursued, when poor Ménard, whose avoirdupois interfered with his agility and who was quite spent and out of breath, declared it to be impossible for him to proceed any farther, and flung himself down upon the grass. Dubourg, who better understood the gravity of the situation, and felt that its unpleasantness would be augmented personally for him should M. Chambertin pursue and overtake them, thought that they might now venture to rest for a while, and he therefore seated himself beside the old tutor.

It took Ménard some time to recover his breath sufficiently to ask Dubourg the questions urged by his curiosity, though the simplicity of his nature did not allow him to doubt his companion.

"Will you not explain to me, Monsieur le Baron," he said at last, "what I am greatly at a loss to understand, why we have run away like a couple of thieves from our friend Chambertin? He was so kind, he overwhelmed us with po-

liteness; we had beautiful rooms, the softest beds, the finest table; he did everything he could to show his appreciation of our merits. What has happened?"

"Dear monsieur, no matter how many times the pitcher goes to the well, in the end it is filled or it is broken, just as you please. In this case it might be either."

"What is the pitcher? What is broken? I don't understand your excellency."

"I can well believe it, and I must explain myself in another manner. Did you see that man they called Durosey, and who only arrived this evening at Chambertin's?"

"Yes, your excellency."

"Do you know what this man is?"

"They said he was a retired merchant."

"Yes; no doubt he took that title to deceive me more easily. Did you notice what a sinister face he has?"

"I noticed, your excellency, that he looked at you very often with marked attention."

"Zounds! I can well believe it; he recognized me! Monsieur Ménard, this man is nothing more nor less than a disguised Turkish spy,— and he has been sent in pursuit of me."

"Is it possible?"

"You know that at different courts I have pleaded the cause of the Greeks, and roused several princes in their favor. The Turks have

sworn my death, and this man is one of their agents. I recognized him from having often seen him in Constantinople. His presence is always the sign of some bad luck that is coming to me. I am sure that the entire neighborhood of M. Chambertin's house was watched by his accomplices. I should have been carried off in the night, and you also; for it was known that you accompanied me. Before a fortnight had elapsed our heads would have ornamented the castle of Seven Towers, and our bodies been dragged at the tail of a horse, to show the power of the Sultan. You see, now, whether I had reason for flight."

"O good God!" cried Ménard, looking behind him. "I think I feel better—a little. Don't you believe we could go on? If they should follow—"

"No, no; don't be anxious, Monsieur Ménard. The rascals have lost our traces and dare not follow us."

"But how did it happen that M. Chambertin received them at his house?"

"Ah, dear Ménard, you do not know men. With a dozen cashmere shawls, a collection of pastilles, a box of bottles of attar of rose, you can make people do whatever you wish. But I don't blame Chambertin. He has been deceived. I had my suspicions, and when the fireworks went off I saw several bad-looking fellows hanging around, and that settled it. I decided to leave,"

"I think you were very wise. But your carriage."

"I shall certainly not go to look for it."

"Nor I! But it belongs to the landlord at Grenoble."

"He has our post-chaise to pay himself."

"But what shall we do hereafter?"

"Use our legs for the present, I am afraid. Anyway, if you haven't a penny to pay for horses there is not much use in a post-chaise."

"What, monsieur! You haven't any money?"

"No, dear Ménard; I lost this evening all I possessed. The presence of this Turk upset me; I knew not what I did, and I played all wrong."

"It is easy to understand that. Fortunately, my pupil, M. Frederic de Montreville, has the funds for the journey. We can do nothing better than go in search of him."

"How can you be sure that Frederic has any money? This young man has just made a new acquaintance, and new acquaintances, Monsieur Ménard, are usually pretty expensive. One must be generous. One can refuse nothing to his sweetheart. I am sure that little girl will get him into foolish expenses. At that age one knows nothing of the value of money; one has no economy."

"But, your excellency, I don't see how they can possibly spend much money when they are living in a wood."

"You don't see! well, I see very easily. It may be one thing, it may be another; they have a thousand fancies. Do you believe that they have stayed all this month since we left them in that cottage? By no means. I'll wager you anything that before now Frederic has set the little lady up in an establishment."

"What! Your excellency, you did not suggest to him —"

"He is big enough to carry out his own wishes. But don't worry; I will go to the wood. I'll go first alone, so as not to make him angry; then if he listens I will bring him with me. But we must live until we have arranged all that. How much money have you?"

"Nearly ten crowns."

"That's very little. But if we lived with economy it would keep us some time. Of course we should have to eat frugally, but that would be good for us. All these grand dinners have heated us up too much. It is very unwholesome to eat five or six dishes every day and drink several kinds of wine."

"But it seems to me, your excellency, we both grew stout at M. Chambertin's."

"Yes; but that would have played us a bad turn in the end. A little cheap sour wine will arrest this tendency to embonpoint. The luxurious delights of Capua caused the Carthaginians to degenerate; in the end, the table of M.

Chambertin would have produced the same effect upon us. That would have made me quite desperate. Decidedly, I shall return to my incognito."

"Ah, your excellency, this time I am of your opinion; for if those Turks should find us—"

"It is partly on that account that I feel sure it would not be safe for us to return to Grenoble. I might be arrested there—that is to say, carried away by these rascals. Besides, we should not be well received by our landlord if we had no money; he would pretend, I will wager, that his carriage was worth more than ours. We will avoid passing through that town, and we will go on, with our ten crowns, and sleep in some little village."

"But when we have nothing more, your excellency, what then?"

"Oh, well, we shall see. Don't let's worry about that so soon. Frederic will write to his father."

"I am afraid the Count will be angry."

"I will write to my aunt."

"To your aunt, your excellency?"

"I mean to my steward. Rest assured, we shall find some way; besides, if we become downhearted will it change the result? Let us be resigned. See, it's lovely weather, and we are not tired; let's go on. My faith! there's no better way to enjoy the country than to travel on foot. Come on, dear Ménard; have courage. Since we have

been together we've met many ups and downs, but have you ever seen me blue?"

"Ah, Baron, everybody hasn't your philosophy."

"I will teach it to you. Think of the misfortunes of Marius, of Hannibal, of Prince Edward, of the little daughter of Henry IV; of the misfortunes of Marguerite of Anjou, and of the many other persons who have been placed in positions much more difficult than ours; then pity yourself, if you dare."

The travellers took the road once more. It was curious enough to see Dubourg in full dress, with frills and thin shoes, walking beside Ménard, who wore gray silk small-clothes, black silk stockings and buckled shoes. In this costume he was forced to climb mountains, to leap over ditches and walk over rough ground. It was fortunate these gentlemen had taken their hats when they went to see the fireworks; otherwise, they would have been obliged to traverse Dauphiny bareheaded.

At daybreak they entered a peasant's house and asked for breakfast. Dubourg ordered an omelet, and with it some of the ordinary red wine of the country. Breakfast was served to these gentlemen under an arbor, where they were surrounded by various domestic animals which freely offered their society.

"How good it is to be in the open air!" cried

Dubourg. "All your crowded antechambers, all your gilded salons,—are they worth these fields, the sweet liberty we enjoy at this table?"

"It is certain," said Ménard, pausing to chase away a great cat, that returned continually to stick its paw in his plate—"it is certain that everything is very free here; there are no restrictions. Scat, there! The dog has run off with my bread!"

"Oh, well, Monsieur Ménard, everything must live. In the time of our first parents these innocent animals shared the meals of their masters. The lion came to eat from the hand, and the tiger played about the knees of man."

"You will confess, Baron, that those animals have very decidedly changed their character."

"Never mind. I love all that which carries me back to that time of innocence. When I see this fowl stepping over the table and the duck dabbling at our feet, I believe myself in the golden age. It is only when I feel in my pockets that I discover the illusion."

Unfortunately, the eggs of the omelet were not fresh and the wine was decidedly sour; Ménard made a face at every mouthful he took and every drink he swallowed, but Dubourg said,—

"I don't know any dish more wholesome than an omelet. Wherever you go you find it. If there are eggs, you surely can have an omelet. Everybody knows how to make it. It is a universal food, a dish of nature."

"If the eggs were only fresh."

"My faith! this little taste of straw isn't disagreeable, and can at need replace the tarragon. As to the wine, — well, it will do us no harm."

"It is devilish sour."

"That shows it is unadulterated."

In spite of all that Dubourg had said to prove the excellence of the breakfast, Ménard repeated as he rose, —

"We must find M. Frederic de Montreville as soon as possible."

Dubourg said to himself, "Yes, he will receive me well when I tell him I have spent all his money in a month. How the devil shall I get out of this? Besides, how can I ask him for more when he has given me all he has? I can't lie to him; that would not do. I really believe I shall have to persuade Ménard to come and live in a corner of the wood with me. We will be hermits, and I will play no more écarté."

The travellers had skirted Grenoble without entering the town. They stopped in a little hamlet, and Ménard spoke again of finding Frederic. Dubourg felt a little irritated, and said he would go at once to Vizille and learn the news. He left the hamlet and, reaching a little wood, stretched himself on the grass and slept there all day. In the evening he returned to Ménard. He held his handkerchief pressed to his eyes, and sighed as if in great grief.

"Well, well! What has happened now?" asked the tutor with much anxiety.

"Fool! Idiot! Ungrateful one!"

"For Heaven's sake speak, Baron, speak!"

"I knew he would do something foolish. He's gone with his young woman. They left the wood two weeks ago."

"O my God! What shall I tell the Count? What shall I tell him when he asks me what I have done with his son?"

"Tell him that you have lost him."

"Do you think, your excellency, that such a response will be satisfactory?"

"Then say he has lost himself. But don't worry, dear Ménard; I assure you we shall find Frederic. I have friends in all the courts of Europe. The young man will be brought back to us."

Poor Ménard was a little quieted by this promise, and Dubourg went on:—

"Let us think of ourselves before we trouble about him; for our position is anything but brilliant. We shall never better ourselves in this miserable hamlet. Let us get to the next town. And, dear Ménard, don't look so downcast; you'll give a bad impression wherever we go, if you are so melancholy."

The travellers started off once more, and that night they reached Voreppe, a little village about two leagues from Grenoble. Dubourg asked for

the best inn, and went there with Ménard. They entered the common dining-room. Dubourg carried his head high, and had a determined air. Ménard did not dare to lift his eyes, and his manner was timid and deprecating.

Several travellers were gathered there, gossiping and waiting for supper.

"Do you gentlemen wish to take supper at the table d'hôte?" asked the servant.

"Yes, of course," replied Dubourg. "We love society — don't we, dear friend?"

"Yes, your ex — yes, dear friend," said Ménard. A punch in the ribs had reminded him that there was to be no longer a baron. Dubourg listened to what was said around him, but the conversation was not especially interesting; the merchants talked of their business, some of the village people repeated the news. Dubourg heard nothing in all this of a new Chambertin to dazzle.

He walked about the room with great strides, rattling some big pennies in his pocket, and stopped every few minutes before Ménard to offer him a pinch of snuff. Ménard, in spite of his sadness, could not but feel cheered at sight of the box that was presented to him.

Suddenly a little gentleman about fifty years old entered. He was dressed in a cinnamon-colored coat, green small-clothes, and boots à la hussard. He wore a cap of which the visor might have

served for an umbrella, entered the salon with an air of being very busy, and spoke exceedingly loud.

"They will not come! They can't get here, and there is my cast incomplete! I'm desperate! I have no more spirit for anything!"

The little man threw himself into a chair and the people of the village and of the inn surrounded him.

"What's the matter, Monsieur Floridor?" said the landlady. "Haven't your actors come?"

"The best, the most important are not here,— the lover and the noble father, two talents lacking to complete my troupe. The lover came from Cambrai, where he has played the leading parts for twenty years. He has a charming, a wonderful talent. A month ago I saw him play 'Sargine; or, The Pupil of Love,' because for several years he had taken both the lover's rôles and those of the ingénu. Ah, I was satisfied — more than satisfied! Magnetic voice, superb figure! He is a little taller than I. And in tragedy, what fire, what soul! I have wept to see him play Tartuffe. As to the noble father — ah, there is the gifted actor! He has been the delight of Beaugency for thirty years, and I have seen him at Paris play with Doyen with maddening success. He can fill all the rôles. He can play kings, fathers, tyrants, old men. There is nothing he cannot do. He is only cast as noble father because he has no

teeth, but this does not prevent his being very telling in his speech."

"And why have they not come?"

"Oh, why? Because the Colin has a cold, and the noble father got into a row in a wineshop and is in prison for a fortnight. These things only happen to me! After I had taken all that trouble to make a theatre, a pretty theatre, out of the old stable, to have it turn out so! I succeeded admirably, for the theatre is beautiful. I flatter myself our hall is charming, — an orchestra, a parterre, three first-tier boxes and an upper gallery; all on one floor, and decorated with taste.

"I was going to leave the theatre of Grenoble far behind; the people around here would have been so delighted. They are all connoisseurs at Voreppe, and, though they have never had a theatre here, I am sure I should have made a great deal of money. I had one box engaged by the magistrate. I gave him free entrance with his family; and all the principal people of the neighborhood said they would come, perhaps."

The little gentleman stopped at last to take breath and wipe his face. Dubourg had not lost a word of what he had said. He sat in a corner of the dining-room thinking deeply over some new project.

"Really, it is very exasperating," said the landlord. "I had ordered a dress for my daughter to wear when I took her to the comedy."

"Exasperating, did you say?" cried Floridor, twisting himself upon his chair like one possessed. "Why, it is frightful! I would give a hundred francs to replace my two actors. But that's nothing. I would gladly sacrifice myself to open my theatre."

Dubourg heard these words. He had remained in the background and had not appeared to be interested in what was said.

"Ah," said one of the waiters of the inn, "if I only knew how to act, I'd do my best to get that."

"I had engaged my two artists for a month at sixty francs each," said M. Floridor. "That is a little high; but you have to pay for talent."

"And can't you replace them?"

"Why, how can I? I have made a tyrant of the wigmaker and a confidant of the journeyman carpenter, who has a superb voice. I persuaded the constable's wife to play the princesses, and I've got the cooper's widow for an ingénue. That is all I can find in the village. But they go beautifully; they are jewels.

"As to me, I play when it is necessary; but as I must also be prompter I cannot take any long rôles. I had collected quite a little wardrobe of costumes. There are two Spanish coats which the last rope-dancer left for security with the wine-shop keeper; there's an old lawyer's robe to cut up for tunics, two otter caps to use as turbans, and

some curtains that I bought at Grenoble to make mantles.

"We should have opened day after tomorrow with 'Phèdre' and 'Le Devin du Village.' In 'Phèdre' the carpenter would have been Aricie, because we have only two women. But he is very fine-looking; he has no beard, and he would have done very well. As to the two confidants, Ismène and Panope, I will declaim them from my box.

"What a success we should have had! My Colin would have done Hippolyte, and my noble father would have been magnificent as Theseus! The wigmaker took the rôle of Théramène. The rascal had his part at the ends of his fingers; he did not make a beard without reciting it. And after all that, Hippolyte must get a cold, and Theseus go to quarrelling in a wineshop!

"How shall I make it go? Ah, if a great actor from Paris would only come to town, or a talented stranger, such as are often going about! But such a man will never stop at Voreppe."

"Supper is served, gentlemen," said the servant of the inn.

"All that won't keep you from eating, Monsieur Floridor," said a pedler to the little man.

"Of course; I shall eat from habit, but I have no appetite. This event has cut me through and through, legs and arms."

"But it hasn't cut his tongue," said Ménard, under his breath. He was preparing to seat him-

self at the table when Dubourg advanced with a majestic air, paused before him, and began to recite, moving his right arm as if he were swimming: —

"Yes, since so faithful a friend I find,
My fortune a smiling face inclined;
And already my anger doth disappear,
Since she has cared to rejoin us here."

Ménard gazed at Dubourg with a startled air.

"Have you found him?" he asked. "Who, then? Is it my pupil? Will he come? Is he going to rejoin us here?"

Dubourg stepped on Menard's foot, because he observed that Floridor, instead of sitting down at the table, was listening with attention. He grasped the tutor's arm and cried, —

"Is it thou, dear Élise? Oh, thrice happy day!
Oh, blest the Heaven that thus my vows doth pay!
Thou who, like me from Benjamin descended,
Gave to my earliest years a joy unended."

"Delicious! delicious!" cried M. Floridor, advancing toward Dubourg, clapping his hands.

Ménard rolled his eyes about, looking for that Élise of whom the Baron had spoken. He saw only the servant of the inn, and turned to ask if she were called Élise.

"Monsieur is an actor?" said M. Floridor, turning to Dubourg, hat in hand.

"Me, monsieur!" replied Dubourg, pretending that he was surprised and annoyed at having

been overheard. "Me! I swear to you, monsieur — but what could have given you that impression!" he added, deepening his voice, like the villain in a melodrama.

"Did you ask what?" cried the little man. He was enchanted. He took Dubourg's hand and pressed it in his own.

"Ah, monsieur, you betrayed yourself immediately, without suspecting it. But I should have recognized you anyway. That voice, that manner, those noble and majestic poses! Only an actor of the first order could unite all that. You are he. You cannot deny it."

"I see," said Dubourg, smiling with an air of false modesty, "that it is difficult to conceal anything from you; but my comrade and I have resolved to preserve an incognito."

"Your comrade!" cried the little man, trembling with joy. "Is monsieur also an actor?"

"He is a first-class talent in the weeping line, superb in tragedy, and of a natural humor in comedy," said Dubourg, pointing to Ménard. The tutor was listening to all this like a person who heard a language he did not understand. But M. Floridor did not leave him in this state of immobility. He fell upon Dubourg's neck, he fell upon Ménard's neck, and he would have fallen upon the neck of the maid if they had not stopped him.

"Heaven has sent them!" he cried, running

around the room like a mad person. "My hall will open! We shall play 'Phèdre.' We shall have the whole town in tears with 'Le Devin du Village.' Landlord, give us a bottle of your best wine. I have the honor of offering a supper to two actors who are here incognito."

"What is he talking about?" whispered Ménard to Dubourg.

"That means that we are two great actors of the king of Poland. This twaddler is paying for our supper, and he will pay us much more besides. Talk like me, now, and try not to have the air of an imbecile."

"But, your excellency! you! me! Pass for actors!"

"Monsieur Ménard, actors are men, like all others. Roscius was admitted with Sylla, Garrick is buried near the kings of England, Molière was an actor, and is not the less a great man. Two of the first actors of our time have played in comedy, and have lost nothing by that."

"But, monsieur, Baron, I have never played."

"Neither have I, but that does not frighten me."

"If they find it out what will they say?"

"They will not know it, as we are here incognito."

"But I have no memory, and I shall never be able to learn a rôle."

"They will prompt you."

"But I am very timid, and I should never dare appear in public."

"When you get your rouge and patches on you'll be as cheeky as a page."

"I shall be detestable."

"We'll charge them a high price, and they will think we are wonderful."

"But—"

"O Heavens! Don't think of any more 'buts.' Remember all this is only for three or four days. It is just a little good time. It will have no results, and will enable us to wait comfortably until our funds arrive. It seems somewhat singular, however, that when a man like me, a Polish nobleman, an elector palatine, decides upon a certain action, a commoner like you should give him advice. If you don't play the comedy with me, I'll abandon you to the anger of the Count of Montreville, and what will you do? You do not know how to find his son."

"I will play, monsieur! I will play!"

"That's fortunate."

While this little dialogue was going on M. Floridor ran into the next house, where the wigmaker lived, telling him that two great actors had just arrived at the Sun of Gold Inn. He did not know their names, but they must be of renown, for they travelled incognito, and it was a fine opportunity to retain them for several engagements in the town.

The wigmaker left the curls of the recorder's wife, for which his iron was hot, and ran to tell the news to all his patrons. The patrons told it to their neighbors; it passed from one to another, like a game of crambo. The town of Voreppe is not very large, and before the inhabitants slept they knew that two illustrious actors, who travelled incognito, were within their walls.

M. Floridor returned, and seated himself at the table. Dubourg was careful to place Ménard next himself, so that he could prompt him at the right time. The director of the theatre was seated on the other side of Dubourg. The remaining guests showed much regard for the two travellers, because they saw that M. Floridor treated them with such consideration. People frequently follow the example of others in this world, without asking the reason.

The little director talked continually, Dubourg launched tirades and quotations from time to time, as they returned to his memory, and Ménard concentrated himself entirely on his plate.

"I would give a great deal to know with whom I have the honor of taking supper," said M. Floridor.

"We do not wish to be known," said Dubourg; "but, after all your courtesy, it seems ungracious to remain silent. We are the two leading actors of Cracovia; we have a leave of absence for travel in France, to perfect ourselves in the French

language, which is that of the Polish theatre. Owing to this fact, our plays are frequented only by the best people of the country, like the Bouffons of Paris."

"I understand; I understand. And what kind of plays do you give?"

"All, from the pantomime to grand opera. My comrade Wolowitz, whom you see, is the Fleury of Poland; and I may venture to say that I am the Talma. Ah, if you could only see both of us in 'The Hunters and the Milkmaid'! But you do not play opera here."

"Pardon me; we play opera,—opera comique, without music indeed, because we have not an orchestra; but if you deign to yield to our wishes, our city will be delighted to see on our stage two artists like yourselves."

"There's no doubt about our popularity in Poland. Ah, when we play to a good crowd there's some fun in it. Do you remember, Wolowitz, at Smolensk? We had played 'The Deserter' and 'The Dog of Montargis.' You played the assassin. Eh? Do you remember the effect you produced?"

Wolowitz did not reply because he did not yet know his name. Dubourg kicked him under the table several times to make him lift his head. He replied, while he went on with his supper, "Yes, your excellency."

"Do you see? He still calls me 'your excel-

lency,'" said Dubourg. "He always thinks he is on the stage."

Another kick recalled to Ménard that he had been very stupid, and he murmured in Dubourg's ear, "Tell me your name then; I can't divine it."

"When people saw on the bills 'Boleslas and Wolowitz,'" replied Dubourg, looking significantly at Ménard, "the crowd filled the theatre, and we were covered with wreaths and flowers."

"Oh, you will have them here!" cried M. Floridor. "They will throw them to you. I have had a dozen made expressly to throw on the heads of my actors. You will have verses made in your honor, too, — quatrains. I have arranged all that."

"You are right; that is always good. That flatters the actor and excites the public."

"Ah, Monsieur Boleslas, can I hope that you and your comrade will consent to grant us a few appearances?"

Dubourg required pressing. They had given an oath, he said, not to play in any theatre in France. Floridor pressed them, besought them, and finally ordered a fresh bottle of wine. Ménard was touched by the supper and the attentions of the little director, and when he rose from the table he would have played anything he was asked.

Dubourg did not yield so easily, because he

wished to be paid as high a price as possible. Floridor did not leave him; he was ready to throw himself on his knees. He would make any sacrifice, he said, to open his theatre with such remarkable actors. At last he offered these gentlemen a hundred francs for four performances, which was an enormous price for an entertainment given in a barn. Dubourg consented, declaring that he did so merely as a favor.

The little man was in a transport. He made three posters upon the spot, which should be put up in the town the next morning, to announce to the public that the celebrated Polish actors, Boleslas and Wolowitz, would play in their theatre.

"We wish to open with 'Phèdre' or with 'Le Devin du Village,'" said Floridor.

"Oh, well, it makes no difference to us!" cried Dubourg. "Anything you please."

"In that case we will make our début with these."

"Gladly. I will play Phèdre."

"What! Phèdre? Do you play feminine rôles also?"

"Oh, of course not. I meant to say Hippolyte. And Wolowitz will make you a superb Theseus."

"Excellent! For 'Le Devin du Village' I only need the Colin."

"I will take charge of that. In four days we will play both of them."

"Four days is rather long."

"But we must have a little rest first."

"Very well; we will wait four days. You will be announced tomorrow. Have you a wardrobe?"

"No. Because we did not expect to play."

"Never mind; I will take care of your costumes."

Floridor left our two travellers, and they prepared to retire. Dubourg laughed at this new adventure; and Ménard said to himself again, "As long as the Baron does it, why should not I?"

University of California
SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY
405 Hilgard Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90024-1388
Return this material to the library
from which it was borrowed.

PG2318. A11 1902

Amw